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**The Shī'ī past in Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī's *Kitāb
al-Aghānī*: a literary and historical analysis**

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Declaration

This is to certify that that the work contained within has been composed by me and is entirely my own work, except for Appendices Three and Six, which derive from the published texts of the *Aghānī* (al Alami edition) and *Sharḥ nahj al-balāgha* (Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī edition) for the purpose of textual comparison (see Chapters Two and Six). No part of this thesis has been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Signed:

Thesis Abstract

The *Kitāb al-Aghānī* (*the Book of Songs*) is one of the most important sources for Arabic literature and history. While its compiler, Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī (died after 356/967), is generally viewed as a “Zaydī Shī‘ī”, no study has engaged in depth with the manifestation of his sectarian perspective in the *Aghānī*. This thesis addresses the question of whether al-Iṣfahānī’s sectarian perspective can be discerned in the *Aghānī* via literary analysis based primarily upon redaction criticism. By examining the compiler’s interventions (which took place by means of selecting, repeating, and juxtaposing source material, as well as by his comments and editorial remarks), this thesis argues that al-Iṣfahānī indeed presents past people and events central to the Shī‘ī worldview in accordance with his sectarian affiliation. Furthermore, this thesis questions the label “Zaydī” that has been attached to al-Iṣfahānī. Based on textual analyses of the *Aghānī*, as well as evidence from his *Maqātil al-Ṭālibīyīn* (“The Ṭālibid Martyrs”) and other evidence for the tenth-century context, this thesis suggests that al-Iṣfahānī’s religious thought can be construed as a “mild” form of Shī‘ism — in the sense that it does not entail belief in a specific lineage of imams and repudiation of most of the Companions including the first three caliphs — but cannot necessarily be identified with any sect, as set down in the heresiography. It is also suggested that this kind of Shī‘ism may have been promoted by al-Iṣfahānī’s patron, the Būyid vizier, Abū Muḥammad al-Muhallabī (291–352/903–963) in the complex sectarian context of mid-tenth century Iraq.

This thesis comprises seven chapters. Chapters One and Two introduce the life of the

compiler, the wider historical context, the *Aghānī*, its textual problems, and its overarching structure. These two chapters lead to three conclusions: first, the *Aghānī*, in all likelihood, was dedicated to Abū Muḥammad al-Muḥallabī; second, the view that al-Iṣfahānī was a Zaydī is untenable; third, it is very likely that the *Aghānī* retains its original form (as designed by al-Iṣfahānī). Chapter Three investigates the sources used by al-Iṣfahānī in the *Aghānī* with regard to their transmission in order to establish that the published text can indeed be subjected to redaction criticism for the purpose of better understanding the compiler's agenda (or agendas). Chapters Four and Five present the results of the literary analysis of the *Aghānī*, which demonstrate the articulation of a Shī'ī past in the *Aghānī*, as well as highlighting the limits of redaction criticism and al-Iṣfahānī's other editorial concerns. Building upon Chapter Five, which concludes that the *Aghānī* reflects al-Iṣfahānī's sectarian vision, Chapter Six characterizes al-Iṣfahānī's Shī'ī beliefs by examining his treatment of Ghulāt, Imāmīs, Sunnīs, 'Alids, and the Companions, including the first three caliphs. Chapter Seven puts the results of the analyses into their historical context, specifically in light of the career of his patron, al-Muḥallabī. The Conclusion outlines the key findings of this thesis, with remarks on potential avenues for future research.

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Notes on Conventions

The Arabic transliteration follows the system employed by the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, *THREE*. Except for those terms familiar in English (such as Iraq, Syria, caliph, imam, or Islam), which are represented in their anglicized form, Arabic and technical terms are italicized and transliterated, but places and the words that describe political or religious factions (for instance, Sunnī or Shīʿī) are not italicized.

Unless otherwise noted, translations are my own, ellipses in the quotations marked in square brackets indicate that the omission has been rendered by me. Any mention of the printed edition of the *Aghānī* refers to the Al Alami edition. In my translations, material in square brackets is there to clarify points of obscurity (usually pronouns), while round brackets show the transliteration of key terms or phrases. In the footnotes, when works that comprise short articles or entries (such as biographies or *ḥadīths*) are referenced, I first give volume and page numbers, and then the sequential number in round brackets.

Both Islamic lunar *hijrī* (AH) and Common Era (CE) dating are used when introducing events, such as death dates.

Abbreviations

*EI*² — *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition

*EI*³ — *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Three

The Shī‘ī past in Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī’s *Kitāb al-Aghānī*: a literary and historical analysis

Introduction

This thesis begins by searching for Shī‘ism in the *Kitāb al-Aghānī* and finishes with a re-evaluation of tenth-century (CE) Shī‘ī Islam on the basis of evidence from the same text. It investigates two questions related to the *Kitāb al-Aghānī* (hereafter, the *Aghānī*) and its compiler. First, does al-Iṣfahānī assert a Shī‘ī perspective in his *Aghānī*? Second, what are the implications, if the *Aghānī* can be demonstrated to be a Shī‘ī text? Previous studies all deny any significant infiltration (used in this thesis in a neutral sense) of a Shī‘ī agenda into the *Aghānī*, but none support this view with a systematic analysis of the text.¹ The present study will address the first question by applying redaction criticism (*Redaktionsgeschichte*) in order to show that there is in fact a Shī‘ī agenda at work in the *Aghānī*.² As for the second question, this thesis will integrate the findings derived from redaction criticism in order to understand the *Aghānī* in the light of the articulation of a Shī‘ī ideology characterised by a “moderate” take on the early Muslim community’s conflicts and by the career of al-Iṣfahānī’s patron, al-Muhallabī. In doing so, this thesis explores the complexity of tenth-century Shī‘ism by engaging with the question of al-Iṣfahānī’s sectarian affiliation. This approach illustrates the limits of the perspectives derived from heresiography composed by the ‘*ulamā*’ (scholars) and of the top-down approach of

¹ See below, pages 23–27.

² Norman Perrin, *What is Redaction Criticism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 1. See, further, below on page 37.

defining a sect's membership based on descriptions in these works. Consideration of the question of whether al-Iṣfahānī is a Zaydī, as al-Ṭūsī (385 – 459–60/995 – 1066–7) claims, will lead us to re-think such labels' validity.³ In return, by understanding al-Iṣfahānī's sectarian perspective in its own right, without imposing the presuppositions of the '*ulamā*', it is possible to evaluate Shī'ī Islam beyond the scholarly categories and thus show its richness and elasticity.

Definitions of Terms

Unless otherwise noted, this thesis uses the term “Shī'ī”, or “Shī'a”, in its etymological sense: it is derived from *shī'at 'Alī* (the party of 'Alī) and is equivalent of the Arabic *tashayyu'* and its adjective, *mutashayyi'*. When we describe someone as Shī'ī, we mean that the person in question holds special sympathy and affection for 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and his family, without necessarily identifying him or her with any subgroup (such as Imāmī, Ismā'īlī, or Zaydī) subsumed under the umbrella term Shī'a. This sense is relevant, in particular, to our characterisation of al-Iṣfahānī as a Shī'ī, a Shī'ī partisan, or as any other collocation with Shī'ī. Although this usage lacks precision, it helps this thesis proceed with a framework that facilitates an investigation into al-Iṣfahānī's religious views in its own right. The preference for the term Shī'ī to proto-Shī'ī does not imply a presumption that the Shī'īs to whom this thesis refers embrace the religious ideas and observances defined in later periods. Rather, given that the term Shī'ī, as defined here, does not prescribe a set of rituals and ideas, this thesis uses Shī'ī to avoid unnecessary engagement with the genuine sectarian identity of the subject in question.⁴ By extension, the phrases, “mild

³ Al-Ṭūsī, *al-Fihrist*, ed. Muḥammad Ṣādiq (Qom: al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, ND), 192.

⁴ For instance, al-Kumayt b. Zayd is a Shī'ī, according to al-Iṣfahānī, but an examination of his poetry

Shī'ism", "moderate Shī'ism", or "Shī'ism in a mild form," denote an ideology that accords 'Alī and his family a special status but does not antagonize the majority of the Companions who refused to pay allegiance to 'Alī, including the first three caliphs. Although the words "mild" or "moderate" might imply a Sunnī-centric perspective, it is used here, again, in a purely neutral sense.

The term, "sect", and its adjective, sectarian, are used here without any derogatory meaning or any implication that there is an underlying orthodoxy.⁵ Rather, they are used in an attempt to represent the Arabic word, *firqa* (plural: *firaq*), which denotes a group pertaining to the Islamic *umma* but, in one way or another, different from others. Mostly, it is used as a substitute for Shī'ī, in relation to al-Iṣfahānī. For instance, "al-Iṣfahānī's sectarian agenda" and "al-Iṣfahānī's Shī'ī agenda" are almost used synonymously.

Likewise, "agenda" is understood in a neutral, rather than a negative, sense. While the term originally connotes an intention at work and thus may imply a propagandistic purpose, it is used by this thesis to signify the deliberate embodiment of one's *Weltanschauung* through the representation of the past, but not necessarily for the promulgation of one's ideals.⁶ That is, an agenda, as the term is used here, is a motive that determines the compiler's editorial decisions with regard to the articulation of a perspective, but whether this motive stems from how he understands

suggests that he is likely to have been a Hāshimī rather than a Shī'ī, in a strict sense. However, this thesis is concerned with how al-Iṣfahānī presents this poet with regard to his confessional tendency, rather than with his real belief; see page 215. For al-Kumayt, see: Wilferd Madelung, 'The "Hāshimīyyāt" of al-Kumayt and Hāshimī Shi'ism,' *Studia Islamica* 70 (1989): 5–26.

⁵ *Oxford Dictionary of English*, s.v. "sect": "a group of people with somewhat different religious beliefs (typically regarded as heretical) from those of a larger group to which they belong." As noted above, "heresy" is not implied when this term is used in this thesis.

⁶ *Ibid.*, s.v. "agenda": "the underlying intentions or motives of a particular person or group."

the past in accordance with his views or from his attempt to assert the validity of his or others' conceptions remains pendent.

Finally, the concepts of author, compiler, and editor deserve some discussion. The idea of authorship, defined as “an individual who is solely responsible — and therefore exclusively deserving of credit — for the production of a unique work,” is not entirely compatible with the Arabic terms *mu'allif* or *muṣannif*, which are better understood and translated as compiler.⁷ The majority of medieval Arabic literature, with the exception of the so-called rhetorical prose, such as *maqāmāt*, poetry, and epistles, appears in the form of *akhbār* compilations. The *mu'allif* or *muṣannif* produces his works from the existing material by means of selection, juxtaposition, and arrangement.⁸ In this sense, the compiler plays the role of editor as well. This thesis uses the term compiler to denote al-Isfahānī's role because this is how he perceives himself throughout the work.⁹ The preference for the term compiler does not preclude any assertion of his authorial voice or of editorial intervention in al-

⁷ The definition is quoted from Martha Woodmansee, ‘The Genius and the Copyright: Economic and Legal Conditions of the Emergence of the “Author”,’ *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 17 (1984): 426. Yet the idea of authorship (in the sense that one takes the credit for the existence of a literary work) certainly existed in the pre-modern Islamic world. A poet is the author of his or her poems; although the term author is not used, the concept of authorship is discernible in the huge literature on the *sariqa* and phrases such as *fulān ṣāhib kitāb*; on *sariqa*: “*sariqa*” in *EP*² (W.P. Heinrichs). For instance, Ibn al-Nadīm characterizes Ibn Isḥāq as *ṣāhib al-siyar*, as he takes the credit for the making of the *siyar* by collecting and arranging the source material in circulation: *al-Fihrist*, ed. Riḍā Tajaddud (Tehran: Dār al-Masīra, 1988), 105.

⁸ Andreas Görke, “Authorship in the *Sīra* Literature,” in *Concepts of Authorship in Pre-Modern Arabic Texts*, ed. Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila and Lale Behzadi (Bamberg: Bamberg University Press, 2015), 63–92; Fred M. Donner, “‘Uthmān and the Rāshidūn Caliphs in Ibn ‘Asākir’s *Tā’rīkh madīnat Dimashq*: A Study in Strategies of Compilation” in *Ibn ‘Asākir and Early Islamic History*, ed. James E. Lindsay (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 2001), 44–61; Sebastian Günther, “Maqātil Literature in Medieval Islam,” *Journal of Arabic Literature* 25-3 (1994): 199–210; Stefan Leder, “Features of the Novel in Early Historiography. The Downfall of Xālid al-Qasrī,” *Oriens* 32 (1990): 72–74; Stefan Leder and Hilary Kilpatrick, “Classical Arabic Prose Literature: A Researchers’ Sketch Map,” *Journal of Arabic Literature*, 23-1 (1992): 16–18.

⁹ In the preface and elsewhere, al-Isfahānī, or the copyist to whom he dictated the text, calls al-Isfahānī *mu'allif*: Abū al-Faraj al-Isfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, ed. Yūsuf al-Baqā'ī and Gharīd al-Shaykh (Beirut: Al Alami Library, 2000), vl.1, 14; vl.4, 39, 71; vl.14, 113, 260.

Iṣfahānī's work, as these two roles are necessarily employed when he deals with copious source material. Thus, while this thesis calls al-Iṣfahānī a compiler and his work a compilation, it also uses phrases such as authorial voice, editorial involvement, editorial decision, and editorial intervention to characterize al-Iṣfahānī's selection, repetition, and placement of reports and the source of meaning behind his renderings.

Al-Iṣfahānī the Shī'ī and His *Kitāb al-Aghānī*

Abū al-Faraj 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. al-Haytham al-Umawī al-Iṣfahānī (died after 356/967) was a litterateur, well-versed in a number of Arabic sciences, including *ayyām al-'arab* (pre-Islamic tribal sagas), genealogy, music, and poetry. His reputation for erudition is best illustrated by Abū 'Alī al-Muḥassin al-Tanūkhī's (329–384/941–994) comment:

Amongst the Shī'ī narrators whom I have known, none has learnt poems, melodies, reports, traditions (*al-āthār*), *al-aḥādīth al-musnada* [narrations with chains of transmission, including the Prophetic *ḥadīth*], and genealogy by heart like Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī. Very proficient in these matters, he is also knowledgeable in the military campaigns and the biography of the Prophet (*al-maghāzī* and *al-sīra*), lexicography, grammar, legendary tales (*al-khurāfāt*), and the sciences desirable in the court (*ālat al-munādama*), like falconry (*al-jawāriḥ*), veterinary science (*al-bayṭara*), something about medicine (*nutaḥan min al-ṭibb*), astrology, drinks (*al-ashriba*), and other things.¹⁰

Al-Iṣfahānī was also a poet, whose poetry features the “precision of scholars and the

¹⁰ Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Madīnat al-Salām*, ed. Bashshār 'A. Ma'rūf (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 2001), vl.13, 339; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān wa-anbā' abnā' al-zamān*, ed. Iḥsān 'Abbās (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1972), vl.3, 307; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'*, ed. Ḥassān 'Abd al-Mannān (Beirut: Bayt al-Afkār al-Dawliyya, 2004), 2774; al-Qiftī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt 'alā anbāh al-nuḥāt*, ed. Muḥammad A. Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, 1986), vl.2, 251.

merits of elegant poets” (*itqān al-‘ulamā’ wa-iḥsān ẓurafā’ al-shu‘arā’*), according to al-Tha‘ālibī (350–429/961–1038).¹¹ His broad interests are also reflected in the wide range of topics covered by his works. About thirty titles are attributed to al-Iṣfahānī, but most of the works they denote are lost or yet to be discovered. Among these, three are preserved in fragments: *al-Diyārāt*, *Mujarrad al-aghānī*, and *al-Qiyān*, while only his *Maqātil al-Ṭālibīyīn*, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, *al-Imā’ al-shawā’ir*, and *Adab al-ghurabā’* are preserved in manuscripts and published.¹² The biographic sources mention his Shī‘ī affiliation¹³, but do not specify what kind of Shī‘ī he was, except for al-Ṭūsī, who claims that al-Iṣfahānī was a Zaydī.¹⁴ While suggestions of his Shī‘ī tendency can be supported by his authorship of a martyrology of the descendants of Abū Ṭālib — the *Maqātil al-Ṭālibīyīn* — and by his membership of the entourage of the Būyid vizier, Abū Muḥammad al-Muhallabī (291–352/903–963), al-Ṭūsī’s ascription seems less tenable, as it is not corroborated by other early sources.¹⁵

The *Aghānī* is a huge *akhbār* compilation extending to twenty-four volumes (in the edition used in this thesis — the Al Alami edition).¹⁶ It consists of articles about

¹¹ Al-Tha‘ālibī, *Yatīmat al-dahr fī maḥāsin ahl al-‘aṣr*, ed. Mufīd M. Qamīḥa (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1983), vl.3, 127.

¹² Hilary Kilpatrick, *Making the Great Book of Songs: Compilation and the Author’s Craft in Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī’s Kitāb al-Aghānī* (London: Routledge, 2003), 23–25. The authorship of *Adab al-ghurabā’* remains debatable; see, below, footnote 132.

¹³ In addition to those in footnote 10, other sources include: al-Dhahabī, *Mīzān al-i’tidāl fī naqd al-rijāl*, ed. ‘Alī M. Mu‘awwaḍ and ‘Ādil A. ‘Abd al-Mawjūd (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1995), vl.5, 151; Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān al-mīzān*, ed. ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ Abū Ghadda and Sulaymān ‘A. Abū Ghadda (Beirut: Maktabat al-Muṭbū‘āt al-Islāmiyya, 2002), vl.5, 526; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntazam fī tārikh al-mulūk wa-l-umam*, ed. Muḥammad ‘A. ‘Aṭā and Muṣṭafā ‘A. ‘Aṭā (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1992), vl.14, 188.

¹⁴ See footnote 3. While al-Ṭūsī is the earliest source to identify al-Iṣfahānī as a Zaydī, later Twelver Shī‘ī scholars, such as al-‘Allāma al-Hillī, seem to agree with al-Ṭūsī, as noted by al-Khwānsarī, who himself is not very convinced of this label, however: al-Khwānsarī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt fī aḥwāl al-‘ulamā’ wa-l-sādāt*, ed. Asadallāh Ismā‘īlīyān (Tehran: Maktabat Ismā‘īlīyān, 1972), vl.5, 220–222.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*; see also Chapter One.

¹⁶ See footnote 9.

people (especially poets and musicians) and events (pre-Islamic tribal sagas, the Prophet's *maghāzī*, and others) related to songs. The *Aghānī* is divided into three parts: the Hundred Songs, the musicians in the caliphal families, and a selection of songs. Whereas the second part mainly follows the musicians in chronological order, from the first Umayyad to the last 'Abbāsīd musician, the first and the third parts are arranged around songs. A song usually introduces one or more articles about the source of its lyrics, its composer, or any other relevant issue. Each article comprises a profile, which means a summary of the subject's name, genealogy, and other important themes in his or her life; reports juxtaposed with poetry and songs marked with the note *ṣawt*; and, more often than not, an account of the biographee's demise.¹⁷

Previous studies on the *Kitāb al-Aghānī* have tended to deny the existence of any sectarian sympathy in this work. By investigating the articulation of the compiler's sectarian perspective, this research demonstrates that the *Kitāb al-Aghānī* is more than a book of songs and is tinged with al-Iṣfahānī's Shī'ism. Furthermore, the thesis explores a new perspective on the development of the Shī'ism in the tenth century by questioning the labels laid down by the heresiographers, most notably by al-Ṭūsī, and by contextualising the results of the redaction criticism. That is, against the established view that al-Iṣfahānī was a Zaydī, this thesis argues that his sectarian beliefs embraced a mild Shī'ī tendency towards favouring the 'Alids but that he did not necessarily identify with the Zaydiyya.¹⁸ His mild Shī'ism will be re-evaluated in light of the career of al-Iṣfahānī's patron, al-Muhallabī, through rigorous literary and

¹⁷ For more details, see Chapter Two.

¹⁸ The view is taken by Kilpatrick, Crone, and Haider, see footnote 99.

historical analysis. The arguments and approaches related to these questions will be presented, along with relevant literature, in the following sections of the introduction: first, studies on the *Aghānī* in relation to its compiler, Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, and to its historical context — the period prior to and after Būyid rule in Baghdad (334/945); second, the methodology for analysing medieval Arabic compilations; third, studies on the development of Shī‘ism in the tenth century. After these three sections, there follows an outline of the structure of the thesis.

Studies on the *Aghānī*, Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, and the Historical Context

Previous studies hardly consider the consequences of al-Iṣfahānī’s Shī‘ī sympathy for reading the *Aghānī*. Even when the sectarian aspect of the text is taken into account, the relevant studies approach the question of whether the *Aghānī* reflects its compiler’s sectarian sympathy only haphazardly and with the evidentiality of the *Aghānī* as the central concern, as opposed to more contextualised readings. Judgment is usually based on a superficial reading of the text, marred by the fallacy of quoting out of context. Furthermore, while these studies investigate the life of al-Iṣfahānī thoroughly, few attempts are made to recast the *Aghānī* and the ideas that may have shaped it in the broader context of the first half of the tenth century. By reading the *Aghānī* in its historical context, we can gain more insight into the fragmentation and reconfiguration of the Islamic world during a period in which sectarian identities came to be better defined, as well as, more specifically, into the career of al-Iṣfahānī’s patron, al-Muhallabī. This section will address previous research on these two topics and discuss how this thesis addresses them.

Ever since the first Būlāq edition was printed in Arabic in 1868, the *Aghānī* has attracted scholars' attention. Numerous editions, translations, and abridgements of the work have been made for both general and specialist readers.¹⁹ As one of the most important primary sources for Arabic classical literature, history, and musicology, scholars have devoted various studies to addressing different aspects of the *Aghānī*.²⁰ While most of the studies note al-Iṣfahānī's Shī'ī inclination, the question of how this tendency (if present at all) influences the *Aghānī* receives limited attention.²¹

The earliest statement declaring that the *Aghānī* is void of any Shī'ī partisanship came from Shafīq Jabrī in 1951, who reiterated the “objectivity” and “impartiality” of al-Iṣfahānī and thus authenticated his *Aghānī* as a valid source for Islamic and

¹⁹ On the editions, abridgements, and translations produced in medieval and modern eras, see: Kilpatrick, *Making*, 1–7; Ḥusayn 'Āṣī, *Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1993), 90–100; Jalīl al-'Aṭiyya, the preface of *al-Qiyān*, by al-Iṣfahānī, ed. Jalīl al-'Aṭiyya (London: Riad el-Rayyes, 1989), 22–28.

²⁰ As the purpose of this study is to explore the agenda of the compiler, as revealed in his treatment of source material, the studies that focus on the musicology of the *Aghānī* and on classical Arabic musical theories are not reviewed here. For a summary of the musicological studies related to the *Aghānī*, see: Aḥmad Bū Ḥasan, *al-'Arab wa-tārīkh al-adab: namūdḥaj Kitāb al-Aghānī* (Casablanca: Dār Tūbqāl li-l-Nashr, 2003), 97–100. Otherwise, many studies examine the literary criticism and the concept of compilation in the *Aghānī*: Shafīq Jabrī, *Dirāsāt al-Aghānī* (Damascus: Maṭba'at al-Jāmi'a al-Sūriyya, 1951), 8–20; Diyā' Gh. al-'Ubūdī and Mayyāda 'A. al-'Āmirī, *al-Khabar fī Kitāb al-Aghānī li-Abī al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī* (Amman: Dār al-Ḥāmid, 2013); Bū Ḥasan, *al-'Arab*; Dāwūd Sallūm, *Dirāsāt Kitāb al-Aghānī wa-minḥaj mu'allifihi* (Baghdad: 'Ālam al-Kutub, 1969). Kilpatrick addresses the question of how al-Iṣfahānī, as a compiler, conceives of his work: *Making*, 89–127, 239–277. The relevant studies which I was not able to consult include: Moustafa Mandour, “Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī. Sa vie et son “Livre des Chansons” (Kitāb al-aḡānī)” (PhD diss., Université de Paris, Faculté des Lettres, ND); Ṭāniyūs Fransīs, *Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī*, 282–362/897–972. *Adīb shahharahu kitāb* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, 1996); Muḥammad Kh. Mūsā, “Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī Nāqidān” (PhD diss., Jāmi'at Muḥammad al-Khāmis, 1980); Shawqī Dayf, “al-Naqd fī Kitāb al-Aghānī” (MA diss., Jāmi'at al-Qāhira, 1939); Walīd M. Khālīṣ, *al-Naqd al-adabī fī Kitāb al-Aghānī* (Amman, Dār Usāma, 2000); Ṭalāl S. al-Ḥadīthī and Karīm 'A. al-Ka'bī, *Shurūḥ al-Iṣfahānī fī Kitāb al-Aghānī* (Baghdad: Maṭba'at al-Taḍāmun, 1968); Qāsim Baykrāwī, “Maḥmūd al-mu'allif fī al-turāth al-naqdī, Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī fī kitābihi al-Aghānī namūdḥajan” (PhD diss., Jāmi'at Muḥammad al-Khāmis, 1999); 'Abdallāh 'Alī al-Ṣuway'ī, *Maṣādir Abī al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī fī kitābihi al-Aghānī wa-qīmatuhā fī al-dirāsāt al-adabiyya* (Tripoli: Manshūrāt Akādīmiyyat al-Dirāsāt al-'Ulyā, 2005).

²¹ For primary sources that mention al-Iṣfahānī's Shī'ī conviction, see: footnote 10.

Arabic literary history.²² Jabrī's argument is based on the fact that al-Iṣfahānī's treatment of the enemies of the Shī'īs, such as 'Ubaydallāh b. Ziyād — the commander traditionally held responsible for the death of Ḥusayn — does not show any clear hostility.²³ That said, Jabrī does acknowledge that he spotted one place which betrays al-Iṣfahānī's Shī'ī tendency, in the article about the famous Umayyad-era governor, Khālīd al-Qasrī.²⁴

This view has been taken up by many, but for differing reasons. In 1962, Khalafallāh saw the *Aghānī* as being without any sectarian influence, yet not because al-Iṣfahānī is a “neutral” historian; rather, al-Iṣfahānī is simply not a religious person (*al-rajul al-mutazammit*) but one of the libertines (*min al-lāhīn wa-l-‘ābithīn*).²⁵ That is, al-Iṣfahānī, influenced by his Shī'ī family background, compiled the *Maqātil al-Ṭalībīyīn* in his youth and later devoted himself to pleasure and idleness, of which the *Aghānī* was a by-product.²⁶

Khalafallāh's moralistic judgment is founded on dubious assumptions about piety and genre, yet the rejection of any Shī'ī partisanship in the *Aghānī* can be based on a more implausible rationale. According to Mūsā, in 1984, al-Iṣfahānī pretended to be a Shī'ī because the social atmosphere, with the escalation of sectarian conflicts, compelled him to do so.²⁷ Mūsā also refutes al-Tanūkhī's (329–384/941–994²⁸)

²² Jabrī, *Dirāsāt*, 37; *idem*, *Abū al-Faraj al-Aṣbahānī* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1965), 17–18.

²³ Jabrī, *Dirāsāt*, 28–38.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 38–39.

²⁵ Muḥammad A. Khalafallāh, *Ṣāhib al-Aghānī: Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī al-Rāwīya*, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Maktabat al-Anjalū al-Miṣriyya, 1962), 183.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 185.

²⁷ Muḥammad Kh. Mūsā, “Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī (283-ba‘da 362 h.) adīb mashhūr maghmūr,” *Ālam al-Fikr* 15-1 (1984): 278–279.

²⁸ “Al-Tanūkhī” in *EF*² (H. Fāhndrich).

statement about al-Iṣfahānī's Shī'ism as a misspelling: *min al-ruwāt al-mutashayyi'īn* should actually read *min al-ruwāt al-muttasi'īn* (the letter *sīn* was miswritten as *shīn*).²⁹ Without offering any evidence to support his "correct" reading and al-Iṣfahānī's alleged *taqiyya* except for a number of examples in the *Aghānī* taken out of context, Mūsā asserts that there is nothing pro-ʿAlid in the *Aghānī*.³⁰ For al-Aʿzamī, in 1988, al-Iṣfahānī is a Shuʿūbī in a Shīʿī disguise, whose sole purpose is to desecrate the dignity of the Arabs and Islam; thus, his *Aghānī* shows no respect for the *ahl al-bayt*.³¹

In a monograph published in 1993, ʿĀṣī revisited Jabrī's approach, based on textual analysis, and rejected the possibility of Shīʿī bias in the *Aghānī*, as al-Iṣfahānī presents individuals known for their hostility towards the ʿAlids, such as Ibn al-Muʿtazz, in a positive light.³² However, his analysis, like that of Jabrī, is cursory and disregards the possibility that al-Iṣfahānī's personal preference may have abrogated the articulation of his sectarian sympathy. That is, the *Aghānī* may contain a number of agendas which al-Iṣfahānī sought to assert in the work, and one of these is the expression of his admiration for certain personages, such as Ibn al-Muʿtazz.³³ Although the sectarian tendency is left secondary to his fandom in this case, this does not negate the existence of the former in the *Aghānī*.

Finally, Kilpatrick's 2003 work, *Making the Great Book of Songs*, presents the first comprehensive research on the content and structure of the *Kitāb al-Aghānī* in

²⁹ Mūsā, "Abū al-Faraj," 279.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 281–288.

³¹ Walīd al-Aʿzamī, *al-Sayf al-yamānī fī naḥr al-Aṣfahānī ṣāḥib al-Aghānī* (al-Manṣūra: Dār al-Wafāʾ, 1988), 59–60, 73, 187.

³² ʿĀṣī, *Abū al-Faraj*, 54–55.

³³ For the multivocality of the *Aghānī*, see Chapter Four and the discussion on Ibn al-Muʿtazz in 4.4.

western scholarship.³⁴ Nonetheless, the question of Shī'ism's influence on the *Aghānī*, although peripherally mentioned, is sidelined on the grounds of the *Aghānī*'s intended readership and its genre.

The indication of Abū l-Faraj's religious confession, while important, illustrates the limitations of the biographical information contained in the mediaeval sources. For one may wonder whether, throughout his long life, the writer retained the same convictions or held them with the same fervour. While his early *Maqātil al-Ṭālibīyīn* is clearly the work of a Zaydī Shī'ī author addressing a like-minded readership, his other extant works including the *Aghānī* have no obvious confessional bias. They are designed to appeal to the cultivated public, whatever its beliefs. The difference between the *Maqātil* and the other books could simply spring from Abū l-Faraj's consciousness that he was writing for two distinct audiences. But it could also reflect an evolution of some kind in his own politico-religious attitude. Such subtleties do not interest the sources, however, and so this is a question which cannot be answered.³⁵

Kilpatrick negates the existence of Shī'ī sympathy in the *Aghānī*, but she later contradicts herself in a footnote, where she seeks to understand why Khālid al-Qasrī is harshly represented by al-Iṣfahānī:

Khālid al-Qasrī is the only subject of an *Aghānī* article to be systematically cursed [...] Why Khālid deserves this special treatment is not explained in so many words [...] But there is a hint of a more specific reason for the author's hostility in the *Maqātil al-Ṭālibīyīn* (p. 133), which begins the account of the events leading up to Zayd ibn 'Alī's revolt and death as follows [...] The implication is that had Khālid not made his false claim, Zayd would never have gone to Iraq, and he might well have ended his days peacefully in Syria. As a Zaydī, Abū al-Faraj was no doubt more affected by this than by Khālid's repression of Shī'ī uprisings while he was governor of Iraq.³⁶

³⁴ The studies before Kilpatrick in the western scholarship, specifically, the works of Fleischhamer, Günther, and Zolondek, focus on al-Iṣfahānī's sources. Thus, they are not discussed here; see page 30.

³⁵ Kilpatrick, *Making*, 15.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, footnote 70, at 381.

Like Jabrī, Kilpatrick is not able to fully assert the view that the *Aghānī* is free from any sectarian agenda, because there are exceptions to the paradigm that both seek to establish. If we leave aside the less convincing arguments advocated by Khalafallāh, Mūsā, and al-A‘zamī, the studies that deny a Shī‘ī influence on the *Aghānī* do not approach the compiler’s agendas systematically or comprehensively. The conclusion usually rests on how the scholars read the texts and are bolstered by examples that are either taken out of context or arbitrarily reinterpreted. For example, Jabrī cites a story about the poet, Ḥāritha b. Badr, appointed by ‘Ubaydallāh b. Ziyād to collect the revenues of Naysābūr. Ḥāritha b. Badr collected the taxes and returned to ‘Ubaydallāh before the scheduled time and was reprimanded, because his deeds, according to ‘Ubaydallāh, burdened the subjects. In Jabrī’s view, this report, which presents the enemy of the Shī‘īs as a prudent and sensible politician, would not have been included in the *Aghānī* were al-Iṣfahānī biased by Shī‘ī tendencies.³⁷ However, the given report is found in the article about Ḥāritha b. Badr,³⁸ and one of the dominant themes in his biography is his corruption (*fasād*).³⁹ Judged on its own, the report presents ‘Ubaydallāh positively. Nonetheless, as the inclusion of recurrent motifs is deliberate on the part of al-Iṣfahānī as a compiler, the point of including this report is probably to enhance the sense of Ḥāritha’s inadequacy as an official. Thus, Jabrī’s superficial reading not only loses sight of the context of the given report but also fails to distinguish what reports say from what the compiler may have sought to articulate.

Given that al-Iṣfahānī was the compiler of the *Maqātil* and the beneficiary of the

³⁷ Jabrī, *Dirāsāt*, 30–31.

³⁸ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.8, 315.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, vl.8, 308–312, 319–320.

patronage of al-Muhallabī, a Shīʿī vizier, it is curious to assume the *Aghānī* to be void of any sectarian sentiment. This does not mean that the *Aghānī* was a work of Shīʿī propaganda. The *Aghānī* is, as the title suggests, a book of songs and perhaps anticipates a music-loving readership — the court elite, in particular — regardless of their sectarian affiliation.⁴⁰ However, it is not implausible that al-Iṣfahānī chose certain reports and juxtaposed them in a certain way to articulate a Shīʿī discourse, alongside reconstructing the history of music. Thus, this thesis argues that al-Iṣfahānī's Shīʿī tendency does play a part in the compilation of the *Aghānī*. The existence of a Shīʿī agenda in the *Aghānī* will be demonstrated through a comprehensive and systematic application of redaction criticism, which will be explained in section two.

Let us turn to the second topic: how the ideas embodied in the *Aghānī* relate to the context of its compilation, both to tenth-century Baghdad in general and, more narrowly, to the life of al-Iṣfahānī himself. Studies on the biography of al-Iṣfahānī take the form of either monographs concentrating on his biography itself, or combinations of biographical information with cursory studies of different issues or selected texts. Mamdūh Ḥaqqī briefly discusses the system of notation in classical Arabic music after a summary of al-Iṣfahānī's biography.⁴¹ Al-Aṣmaʿī addresses the biography of al-Iṣfahānī with special reference to the social context in which he lived.⁴² However, these studies — including the biographical overviews found in the

⁴⁰ Kilpatrick, *Making*, 15, 107. Ibn al-Nadīm includes a section on the literary productions of the court elite and boon companions, many of whom authored books of songs. It is probably in and for the court that the works about music and songs were produced: Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 129–130, 157–163.

⁴¹ Mamdūh Ḥaqqī, *Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī fī al-Aghānī* (Beirut: Dār Maktabat al-Ḥayā, 1971), 45–62.

⁴² Muḥammad ʿA. al-Aṣmaʿī, *Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī wa-kitābuhu al-Aghānī: dirāsa wa-taḥlīl li-azhā al-ʿuṣūr al-islāmiyya* (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1951), 25–51.

prefaces by the editors of al-Iṣfahānī's works and the abridgements and translations of the *Aghānī* — are no more than collections and reproductions of the primary sources, all derived from the works of Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣfahānī (336–430/948–1038), al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (392–463/1002–1071), al-Thaʿālibī (350–429/961–1038), Ibn al-Nadīm (d. 385/995 or 388/998⁴³), and Yāqūt (574–626/1178–1225).⁴⁴

Khalafallāh's *Ṣāhib al-Aghānī* is the first work to examine the primary sources about al-Iṣfahānī critically. He discredits a number of widely accepted misconceptions, such as the idea that al-Iṣfahānī dedicated the *Aghānī* to Sayf al-Dawla.⁴⁵ His revisionist views on al-Iṣfahānī's biography influenced subsequent biographical writings. He connects the influence of al-Iṣfahānī's associates with the selection of the material in the *Aghānī*, specifically, the entertaining reports; that is, the compilation was shaped to meet the expectations of the readership.⁴⁶ However, he evaluates al-Iṣfahānī's personality and achievement on the basis of a sort of Victorian-esque morality and thus comes up with some problematic ideas.⁴⁷ For instance, when discussing teaching as one of al-Iṣfahānī's sources of income, Khalafallāh concludes that "Abū al-Faraj the libertine, the licentious, is not the

⁴³ The date is controversial; see: "Ibn al-Nadīm" in *EP* (J. Fück). Since *al-Fihrist* was completed in 377/987–8 and Ibn al-Nadīm enjoyed direct transmission from al-Iṣfahānī, it can be viewed as one of the earliest biographical sources for al-Iṣfahānī: Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 158.

⁴⁴ Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī, *al-Aʿlām* (Beirut: Dār al-ʿIlm li-l-Malāyīn, 2002), vl.4, 278; Gernot Rotter, *Und der Kalif beschenkte ihn reichlich: Auszüge aus dem Buch der Lieder* (Tübingen: Horst Erdmann Verlag, 1977), 7; Ṣaqr, the preface in *Maqātil al-Tālibīyīn*, by al-Iṣfahānī, ed. Aḥmad Ṣaqr, 2nd ed. (Qom: Manshūrāt al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, 1991), 5–22; al-Aʿzamī, *al-Sayf*, 17–22; Sallūm, *Dirāsāt*, 9–11; al-Baqāʿī and al-Shaykh, the biography in *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, by al-Iṣfahānī, vl.1, 5–11; the *taṣdīr* in *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, by al-Iṣfahānī, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, 1952), vl.1, 15–37; al-ʿAtīyya, the introduction in *al-Qiyān*, by al-Iṣfahānī, 13–22.

⁴⁵ Khalafallāh, *Ṣāhib*, 15–60, 83–120. For further discussion, see: page 68.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 85–97, 195–200.

⁴⁷ Khalafallāh's work is referenced by: "Abū al-Faraj ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn al-Iṣfahānī" in *Encyclopaedia Islamica* (A. Azarnoosh). Kilpatrick and Günther to some extent accept the revisions and corrections proposed by Khalafallāh, but Kilpatrick does critique Khalafallāh's judgment based on moral standards: "Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī" in *EP* (S. Günther); Kilpatrick, *Making*, 14–23; her critique is at 8.

teacher who would ever refuse to charge tuition from the students.”⁴⁸ This conclusion is speculative, as his sexual immorality does not relate to whether al-Iṣfahānī would have offered free tuition. As a result, Khalafallāh’s research does not offer an impartial evaluation of the intersection between the compiler and his world. Likewise, al-A‘ẓamī, who holds the *Aghānī* to be a polemical work against Arabs and Islam by a Shu‘ūbī compiler trying to pander to the Būyids, simply reads the text out of its context, when he claims that the reports about Sukayna bint al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī’s association with singers and poets are meant by al-Iṣfahānī to denigrate *ahl al-bayt*.⁴⁹

Research into the sources (*Quellenuntersuchungen*) of al-Iṣfahānī’s works produces insights into the transmission of reports in light of teaching activities (*Lehrbetrieb*) and the development of historical and biographical writing. Zolondek and Fleischhammer investigate the sources used in the *Aghānī*, while Günther conducts similar research on the *Maqātil al-Ṭālibīyīn*.⁵⁰ These studies are useful for this thesis, especially when we consider al-Iṣfahānī’s selection of material, which is done as part of redaction criticism.⁵¹ However, these studies show no interest in the ideas embodied in al-Iṣfahānī’s works and their interaction with the external, politico-religious milieu.

Kilpatrick’s *Making the Great Book of Songs* presents an attempt to appreciate the *Aghānī* and its compiler’s purpose in a wider historical context. Compiled in the

⁴⁸ Khalafallāh, *Ṣāhib*, 169.

⁴⁹ Al-A‘ẓamī, *al-Sayf*, 68-72.

⁵⁰ Leon Zolondek, “The sources of the Kitāb al-Aḡānī”, *Arabica* 8-3 (1961), 294-308; Manfred Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen des Kitāb al-Aḡānī* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2004), 11; Sebastian Günther, *Quellenuntersuchungen zu den “Maqātil al-Ṭālibīyīn” des Abū-l-Faraġ al-Iṣfahānī (gest. 356/967): Ein Beitrag zur Problematik der mündlichen und schriftlichen Überlieferung in der mittelalterlichen arabischen Literatur* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1991).

⁵¹ Page 37.

early tenth century, when the position of musicians and singers deteriorated due to the decline of court patronage and the growth of Ḥanbalī activities, the *Aghānī* reveals nostalgia for the heyday of musicians and, possibly, anticipates “a return to the glorious era of the early ‘Abbāsīd caliphate” under Būyid rule in Baghdad and under the patronage of al-Muhallabī.⁵²

While Kilpatrick sets out a sensible framework for viewing the *Aghānī* in light of the musical culture and history, a compilation as complex and voluminous as the *Aghānī* allows for multiple readings and deals with a multitude of issues. That is, although the *Aghānī* is a book of songs, it is never about the music and songs only. Otherwise, it would not have aroused the interest of the compilers after al-Iṣfahānī and been described as *Dīwān al-‘arab* by Ibn Khaldūn.⁵³ Given that a biographee in the *Aghānī*, whether a musician or a poet, may also have other identities, including a Companion of the Prophet, a caliph, or a Shī‘ī imam, al-Iṣfahānī not only addresses the history of songs but also the past of the Muslim community — the past that is pivotal in the formation of various sects’ self-perceptions and identities. It should be remembered that the time in which al-Iṣfahānī lived — the first half of the tenth century — was the period during which the ‘Abbāsīd caliphate lost most of its power to coerce, which thus left the regional polities with Shī‘ī tendencies to pursue their ambitions. These regional polities included the Fāṭimids in Egypt and North Africa, the Ḥamdānids in the Jazīra (Mosul and Aleppo, in particular), the Qarāmiṭa in the

⁵² Kilpatrick, *Making*, 22–23.

⁵³ For a summary of the abridgments and the extracts based on the *Aghānī*, see: Kilpatrick, *Making*, 33. Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima*, ed. ‘Abdallāh M. al-Darwīsh (Damascus: Dār Ya‘rub, 2004), vl.2, 377. The *Aghānī* is also used as a source by the later compilers, such as: Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, vl.5, 99; vl.8, 457; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*, ed. Mufīd Qumayḥa (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2004), vl.4, 224–305; ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Baghdādī, *Khizānat al-adab wa-lubb libāb lisān al-‘arab*, ed. ‘Abd al-Salām M. Hārūn (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1997), vl.7, 585. How the *Aghānī* was adduced in later compilations requires further research.

Syrian Desert and Baḥrayn, Zaydī rule on the Caspian coast (Daylam and for some time Ṭabaristan) and in Yemen, and the Būyids in Fars, Jibāl, and Ṭabaristan.⁵⁴ It is also the time when the different Shī'ī groups acquired fully fledged identities, in terms of ideologies and ritualistic practices.⁵⁵ It is in this context that al-Iṣfahānī compiled his *Aghānī*, under the patronage of the Būyid vizier, al-Muhallabī (291–352/903–963), who was also a Shī'ī,⁵⁶ and, to whom it was possibly dedicated.⁵⁷

As a matter of fact, so far, no attempt has been made to view the *Aghānī* in light of the vizieral career of al-Muhallabī. Previous studies have instead simply considered al-Muhallabī's treatment of various sectarian groups as a reflection of Mu'izz al-Dawla's rule and religious policy. A summary of the view they express is as follows: the Būyids, originating from the Caspian region, where Zaydī missionary activity had been established since the second half of the ninth century, were Zaydīs at the beginning; when Mu'izz al-Dawla seized Baghdad, he maintained a cordial relationship with Abū 'Abdallāh Ibn al-Dā'ī, the son of the Zaydī imam, al-Ḥasan b. al-Qāsim, and later imam in the Caspian region.⁵⁸ Later on, Mu'izz al-Dawla turned to currying favour with Twelver Shī'ism, with the establishment of the official mourning for al-Ḥusayn in 'Āshūrā' and the annual celebration of Ghadīr Khumm.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ Hugh Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates: the Islamic Near East from the sixth to the eleventh century* (London: Longman, 1986), 227–232.

⁵⁵ Moojan Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'ī Islam* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 75–84; Heinz Halm, *Shiism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991), 46–59; Marshall G.S. Hodgson, "The Buyid Era" in *Expectation of the Millennium: Shi'ism in History*, ed. Seyyed H. Nasr, Hamid Dabashi, and Seyyed V.R. Nasr (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 155–158.

⁵⁶ "Al-Muhallabī" in *EP*² (K.V. Zetterstéen and C.E. Bosworth); 1.1.4 and 7.2.

⁵⁷ See: 1.1.4.

⁵⁸ "Al-Ḥasan b. al-Qāsim" in *EP*² (W. Madelung); Ibrāhīm b. Hilāl al-Ṣābī, "Akhbār al-Dawla al-daylamiyya" in *Arabic Texts Concerning the History of the Zaydī Imāms of Ṭabaristān, Daylamān and Gīlān*, by Wilferd Madelung (Beirut: Orient-Institute, 1987), 40–41.

⁵⁹ Joel L. Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam: The Cultural Revival during the Buyid Age* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986), 40; Heribert Busse, *Chalif und Grosskönig: Die Buyiden im Iraq (945–1055)* (Beirut: Orient-Institut, 1969), 421–424; Mafizullah Kabir, *The Buwayhid Dynasty of Baghdad*

This view, however, overestimates Mu'izz al-Dawla's power to coerce al-Muhallabī to implement his orders and underestimates the complexity of network-making in this period.

This thesis proposes a more careful examination of the relationship between al-Muhallabī and al-Iṣfahānī. When the patron-client relationship is understood as more than that between a giver and a recipient, but as an informal institution by which the ruling elite expand a social network to consolidate their political position, as suggested by Roy Mottahedeh, it is possible to interpret the friendship between al-Iṣfahānī and al-Muhallabī from a different but thought-provoking perspective.⁶⁰ Such an analysis of the sectarian articulations in the *Aghānī* shows that the role of al-Muhallabī is far more complex. Al-Muhallabī's religious policy cannot simply be identified with that of Mu'izz al-Dawla. Rather, as a politician handling various groups contending for power inside and outside the court, al-Muhallabī sought to consolidate his position in Baghdad by forging alliances with as many of them as possible. His patronage for al-Iṣfahānī can be understood in this vein. That is, for al-Muhallabī, al-Iṣfahānī, by virtue of his familial connection with the Ṭālibids and his networks with his co-religionists — mild Shī'īs — could be a potential route towards roping in the Ṭālibids in Baghdad.⁶¹

(334/946–447/1055) (Calcutta: Iran Society, 1964), 201–205. It should be noted that Donohue notices al-Muhallabī's difference from his lord in terms of religious policies, but he does not pursue the issue further; also, he spots the tension between Ibn al-Dā'ī and Mu'izz al-Dawla in a Zaydī source: John J. Donohue, *The Buwayhid Dynasty in Iraq 334H./945 to 403H./1012: Shaping Institutions for the Future* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 16, 145–146; Halm, *Shiism*, 48.

⁶⁰ It is well established during this period that the recipient of benefit is obliged to offer his or her loyalty in return — *shukr bi-ni'ma*, a concept rooted in the Qur'ān: Roy Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership in an Early Islamic Society* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2001), 72–96.

⁶¹ See 7.2.

As a summary, previous studies claim that the *Aghānī* does not manifest any Shī‘ī sympathy on al-Iṣfahānī’s part, but this assertion is usually based on superficial readings of examples taken out of context. Furthermore, scholars such as Jabrī and Kilpatrick make somewhat self-contradictory remarks on sectarian partisanship in the *Aghānī*. To examine the question of whether the *Aghānī* can be seen as a Shī‘ī text and the implications arising if that proves to be the case, this thesis will apply redaction criticism, to which we now move in the next section.

An Approach to the *Aghānī*: Redaction Criticism

This thesis will not only challenge the established view that the *Aghānī* has nothing to do with al-Iṣfahānī’s sectarian affiliation, but it will also demonstrate a Shī‘ī agenda in this compilation by a comprehensive survey through redaction criticism. In what follows, an overview of studies in Islamic historiography precedes an explanation of redaction criticism, in order to situate this thesis within current scholarship. Then, the hypotheses and framework upon which the present research is carried out are elucidated.

Research into the sectarian tendencies, religio-political biases, and literary *topoi* embedded in the historiography began with the aim to screen out the “inauthentic” elements in favour of the “authentic” in order to reconstruct historical truth.⁶² While

⁶² Julius Wellhausen, *The Arab Kingdom and Its Fall* (Beirut: Khayats, 1963); Erling L. Petersen, *‘Alī and Mu‘āwiya in Early Arabic Tradition: Studies on the Genesis and Growth of Islamic Historical Writing until the end of the ninth century* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1964); ‘Abd al-‘Aziz al-Dūrī, *The Rise of Historical Writing among the Arabs*, trans. Lawrence I. Conrad (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983); Albrecht Noth and Lawrence I. Conrad, *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition: A source-critical study* (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1994). It should be noted that the scholars mentioned above employ different approaches to the task of separating the reliable from the unreliable sources; for example, Wellhausen’s (and presumably al-Duri’s) proposition of local

the effectiveness of the pursuit of the “historical kernel” is subject to the evaluator’s attitude towards the sources,⁶³ scholars have begun to reflect on problematic historical narratives in relation to the discourse in which the compilers of historiography engaged. Instead of unsound material being eliminated in the search for historical truth, the voices of the compilers begin to be given attention.

By virtue of its importance as a historical source, al-Ṭabarī’s *Tārīkh* became one of the earliest and most popular subjects of this sort of research.⁶⁴ Yet scholarly interest in the purpose of compilation and its context moved beyond the domain of historiography to compilations in other genres⁶⁵ and proceeds in two broad directions: first, consideration of the historical representation of an event, a group (sect or family), or a historical figure or figures and their implications;⁶⁶ second,

historiographical schools is criticized by Noth. For further discussion of the so-called “tradition-critical approach” to Islamic history and *ḥadīth* study, see Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins: the Beginnings of Islamic Historical Writing* (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1998), 13–20.

⁶³ Donner, *Narratives*, 20–31.

⁶⁴ Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), v.1.1, 350–358; Petersen, *Alī*, 157; Abdulkader I. Tayob, ‘Islamic Historiography: The Case of Al-Ṭabarī’s “Tā’rīkh Al-Rusul Wa ’l-Mulūk” on the Companions of the Prophet Muḥammad’ (PhD diss., Temple University, 1989); *idem*, ‘Ṭabarī on the Companions of the Prophet: Moral and Political Contours in Islamic Historical Writing,’ *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 119-2 (1999): 203–210; R.S. Humphreys, ‘Qur’anic Myth and Narrative Structure in Early Islamic Historiography,’ in *Tradition and Innovation in Late Antiquity*, ed. Frank M. Clover and R.S. Humphreys (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 271–290; Tarif Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 73–82; Steven Judd, ‘Character Development in al-Ṭabarī’s and al-Balādhurī’s Narratives of Late Umayyad History’, in *Insights into Arabic Literature and Islam: Ideas, Concepts and Methods of Portrayal*, ed. Sebastian Günther (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 207–227; Boaz Shoshan, *Poetics of Islamic Historiography: Deconstructing Ṭabarī’s History* (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

⁶⁵ Kilpatrick’s *Making the Great Book of Songs* is one example; see also: Hartmut E. Fahndrich, “The *Wafayāt al-a’yān* of Ibn Khallikān: A New Approach,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 93-4 (1973): 432–445; Fedwa Malti-Douglas, “Structure and Organization in a Monographic *Adab* Work: *al-taṭfīl* of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 40 (1981): 227–245; Dimitry Frolov, “Ibn al-Nadīm on the History of Qur’anic Exegesis,” *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 87 (1997): 65–81; Devin Stewart, “The Structure of the *Fihrist*: Ibn al-Nadīm as Historian of Islamic Legal and Theological Schools,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 39-3 (2007): 369–387. Studies on the form and structure of the *ḥadīth* compilations include: Andrew J. Newman, *The Formative Period of Twelver Shi’ism* (Richmond: Curzon, 2000), 193–201; Stephen R. Burge, “Reading Between the Lines: the Compilation of *Ḥadīth* and the Authorial Voice,” *Arabica* 58 (2011): 168–197.

⁶⁶ Tayed el-Hibri, *Reinterpreting; idem*, *Parable and Politics in Early Islamic History: The Rashidun*

studies of one compilation or the comparison of two compilations from the same period.⁶⁷ Despite differences in focus and approach, these studies are carried out on the premise that compilers exert their authorial voice and “impressed their vision upon the material not merely by selecting and arranging pre-existing *akhbār*, but by breaking them up, by rephrasing, supplementing, and composing anew.”⁶⁸ By examining what may have been the agendas of the compilers, it is possible to gain more insights into the development of historiography, the socio-religious milieu in which the compilers lived, and the discourse (debates or polemics over certain issues) with which they engaged.

The present study positions itself in alignment with these studies. Although it addresses an *adab* compilation, this thesis investigates the compilation’s historiographical aspects — specifically, the assertion of a sectarian agenda. As mentioned in section one, previous studies have concluded that the *Aghānī* is largely free from any Shī‘ī tendencies, but this conclusion is more or less based on the superficial and unsystematic reading of one or more reports taken out of context.⁶⁹ To avoid imposing our presumption on the text, this thesis will focus on what al-Isfahānī does as a compiler rather than as an author of any given report(s). This is not to deny

Caliphs (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010); Michael Cooperson, *Classical Arabic Biography: the Heirs of the Prophets in the Age of al-Ma‘mūn* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Sandra S. Campbell, “Telling Memories: The Zubayrids in Islamic Historical Memory” (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2003), 38–103; Heather N. Keaney, *Medieval Islamic Historiography: Remembering Rebellion* (New York: Routledge, 2013); Hannah Hagemann, “History and Memory: Khārijism in Early Islamic Historiography” (PhD diss., University of Edinburgh, 2015).

⁶⁷ David Morray, *An Ayyubid Notable and His World: Ibn al-‘Adīm and Aleppo as Portrayed in his Biographical Dictionary of People Associated with the City* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994); Donner, “‘Uthmān” and P.M. Cobb “Community versus Contention: Ibn ‘Asākir and ‘Abbāsīd Syria,” in *Ibn ‘Asākir and Early Islamic History*, ed. Lindsay; Konrad Hirschler, *Medieval Arabic Historiography: Authors as Actors* (London: Routledge, 2006); Andrew C.S. Peacock, *Mediaeval Islamic Historiography and Political Legitimacy: Bal‘amī’s Tārīkhnāma* (London: Routledge, 2007).

⁶⁸ Chase F. Robinson, *Islamic Historiography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 36.

⁶⁹ See: pages 19–27.

the possibility that al-Iṣfahānī may have made up some story and attributed it to another, but to discover such stories is beyond the scope of this research.⁷⁰ By investigating al-Iṣfahānī's role as a compiler who edits his material to form a coherent narrative, we can distinguish al-Iṣfahānī's perspective from that of his sources. Redaction criticism, with its emphasis on editorial interventions, can facilitate this task of searching for the articulation of a Shī'ī past in the *Aghānī*.

Redaction criticism (an attempt at translating the German word, *Redaktionsgeschichte*), also known as composition criticism or composition history, denotes a discipline within the field of New Testament studies and investigates “the theological motivation of an author as this is revealed in the collection, arrangement, editing, and modification of traditional material, and in the composition of new material or the creation of new forms within the traditions of early Christianity.”⁷¹ As developed in Biblical Studies, redaction criticism has been applied to the Synoptic Gospels, *The Book of Acts*, and the early Christologies.⁷²

Redaction criticism, in the context of the *Aghānī*, investigates the ideological motivation — specifically, the Shī'ī partisanship — behind al-Iṣfahānī's editorial activity. How redaction criticism is made to work with regard to the *Aghānī* in this research is inspired by the approaches of two scholars, Fred Donner, and Hilary Kilpatrick.

⁷⁰ Further discussion, see Chapter Three.

⁷¹ Perrin, *What*, 1.

⁷² Gail P.C. Streete, “Redaction Criticism” in *To Each Its Own Meaning*, ed. Steven L. McKenzie and Stephen R. Haynes (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 108–109.

In order to address the question of whether Ibn ‘Asākir treats each of the *khulafā’ rāshidūn* from the perspective of a particular political or sectarian concern, Donner examines the reports in the biographies in question with regard to the compiling strategies, which comprise strategies of selection, repetition, placement, and manipulation.⁷³ That is, by investigating what kind of reports Ibn ‘Asākir includes and repeats by citing the *ḥadīths* from similar or identical texts with different *isnāds*, as well as how these are put together, Donner concludes that Ibn ‘Asākir shapes the narrative that steers readers towards his point of view — which holds that all Companions of the Prophet were “paragons of moral probity, insight, and dedication to the community.”⁷⁴

Although Donner’s approach seems useful for probing the agendas of compilers, there is a potential problem with the strategy of selection. According to Donner, Ibn ‘Asākir’s selection “can only be discerned by comparison of his compilation with others.”⁷⁵ In doing so, Donner concludes that Ibn ‘Asākir chose not to “reiterate the numerous variants of reports, found in some other collections, that cast doubt on ‘Uthmān’s motives or portray his actions in an unfavourable light”; here, for “some other collections,” Donner cites al-Ṭabarī.⁷⁶ This raises the question of whether the whole of al-Ṭabarī’s *Tārīkh* was available to Ibn ‘Asākir. While Donner justifiably evades this question by comparing the biography of ‘Uthmān with those about other caliphs — which occupy a number of volumes — the problem of the transmission of the sources available to Ibn ‘Asākir in relation to his selection also explains why

⁷³ Donner, “‘Uthmān,” 48–61.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 58, footnote 50.

discussion of the strategy of manipulation is missing.⁷⁷ The strategy of manipulation, which Donner defines as the editing (redaction) of a given passage of text, involves the search for the original text of the report Ibn ‘Asākir cites and then comparison, which shows Ibn ‘Asākir’s redaction.⁷⁸ This, however, is an onerous task, given the sheer size of Ibn ‘Asākir’s work and the quantity of reports he includes. That said, the concept proposed by Donner — examining the overarching arrangement of reports and the selection and repetition of material — has the potential to reveal the editorial hand of compilers, despite some problems embedded in examining selection.

Whereas Donner’s assessment of compiling strategies provides a means of uncovering the agendas of compilations in general, Kilpatrick’s studies highlight the specifics of the *Aghānī*, which can be used as indicators of al-Iṣfahānī’s likely editorial interventions. Kilpatrick’s extensive examination of al-Iṣfahānī’s editorial notes and comments illustrates how al-Iṣfahānī conceives of his compilation in terms of the arrangement of material, the evaluation of the sources, and the criteria for including and excluding reports.⁷⁹ Apart from al-Iṣfahānī’s own voice, Kilpatrick also looks at the interaction between the *akhbār* (reports) and notices that certain motifs and topoi in the *akhbār* are enhanced by their context, which consists of the *akhbār* either in the same or in the neighbouring articles.⁸⁰ Regardless of nuances, Kilpatrick’s observation regarding the internal layers and the interplay between reports in the *Aghānī* to some extent endorse the potential of Donner’s conception of

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 58–59.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 47, 59.

⁷⁹ Kilpatrick, *Making*, 85–127.

⁸⁰ Hilary Kilpatrick, “Context and the Enhancement of the Meaning of *aḥbār* in the *Kitāb al-Aḡānī*,” *Arabica*, 38-3 (1991): 351–354. The recurrent motifs and the connections between articles are discussed in her book; see: Kilpatrick, *Making*, 239–257.

a strategy of placement — how the reports are arranged and juxtaposed has certain implications. Most importantly, in her investigation of the profiles of poets in the *Aghānī* (al-Iṣfahānī's summary of the biography of each subject in the beginning of their article), Kilpatrick, in spite of some limitations to which she admits,⁸¹ shows that the profile of each article, where al-Iṣfahānī takes an active role in the articulation of his opinions, may reveal questions which al-Iṣfahānī seeks to address or key points which he underscores.⁸²

Although the interrelation between reports (their placement and the context apropos them), the comments from the compiler, and the profiles in the articles can complement analysis of the compiling strategies proposed by Donner, there are problems with Kilpatrick's approach. The statements, including the preface and profiles made by the compiler are no doubt useful, but it should be borne in mind that al-Iṣfahānī is not always consistent with his comments. For instance, Kilpatrick notes that al-Iṣfahānī apologises for including the article about al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī, a poet characterised by extremist Shī'ī tendencies; this leaves an impression that al-Iṣfahānī only treats this subject reluctantly, but the fact that this article extends to more than forty pages suggests that al-Iṣfahānī actually has much to say.⁸³ This does not make al-Iṣfahānī a liar and his remarks gibberish. Rather, it is important to corroborate his statements with his treatment of the relevant material.

Another problem lies in Kilpatrick's argument concerning the enhancement of

⁸¹ Hilary Kilpatrick, "Abū al-Faraǧ's Profiles of Poets: A 4th/10th century essay on the history and sociology of Arabic Literature," *Arabica*, 44-1 (1997): 125–126.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 98–99.

⁸³ Kilpatrick, *Making*, 107.

meaning or topoi through considering the reports in context. While how al-Iṣfahānī juxtaposes the reports may indicate his take on certain issues, it is important to define the “context.” If a motif dominates an article, this may have been deliberate on part of al-Iṣfahānī by means of juxtaposition and repetition. However, if there is a motif running throughout a number of articles, a problem arises: how do we know whether these articles are connected by al-Iṣfahānī to one another? As Kilpatrick herself is aware, it is likely that the original order of the articles in the *Aghānī* has been disrupted in the printed edition.⁸⁴ That is, if a number of articles with a recurrent motif were never meant to be read together, then it is important to consider whether the meaning is embedded in the reports which al-Iṣfahānī cites, rather than an articulation of his own opinion.

To recapitulate the above points in relation to the application of redaction criticism, this thesis will examine al-Iṣfahānī’s selection, repetition, and juxtaposition of reports, in addition to his remarks interposed in the reports and profiles. The merit of redaction criticism lies in its focus on the compiler’s editorial interventions and thus prevents a superficial and arbitrary reading of the text. Needless to say, al-Iṣfahānī’s profiles, editorial notes, and comments offer insights into the compiler’s vision, but it must be kept in mind that the compiler may beat about the bush. Thus, the remarks should be considered in light of how the compiler actually deals with his source material. Moreover, due to uncertainty regarding the original order of the articles, this thesis will only consider the material confined to one and the same article in each case, without seeking correlation between the reports of two or more articles. Textual

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 30–32. The problem of the original order of the *Aghānī* is thoroughly discussed by: Sallūm, *Dirāsat*, 19–25. The textual problems in the *Aghānī* are addressed in 2.3.

analysis through the selection, repetition, and juxtaposition of material is feasible for our search for a sectarian agenda in the *Aghānī* for the following reasons.

First, al-Iṣfahānī was dealing with copious materials from which he made his selections and arrangements.⁸⁵ Although it is clear that, in some cases, al-Iṣfahānī admits his inability to find reports relevant to his subject, most articles — and the long articles in particular — are the result of selection from information in circulation.⁸⁶ This is well-illustrated by the 150 direct informants in the *Aghānī*, not including the written sources and the anonymous informants.⁸⁷ From these 150 informants, he acquires the narrations of more transmitters from earlier generations. Furthermore, al-Iṣfahānī sometimes mentions the reason for excluding materials.⁸⁸ This shows a conscious editorial and selection process in which al-Iṣfahānī was engaged when compiling the *Aghānī*.

Second, al-Iṣfahānī, from time to time, leaves editorial notes, which are informative concerning his compiling process and his opinions.⁸⁹ This shows that the arrangement of reports is meaningful.

Third, repetition is ubiquitous in the *Aghānī*. The verbatim repetition of a report, including the *matn* and *isnād*, is rare. However, the gist conveyed by the reports of similar *matn*, but on different authorities, is repeatedly quoted, especially in the long articles.

⁸⁵ Sallūm, *Dirāsāt*, 73–76.

⁸⁶ See, for instance: al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.3, 36–37; vl.4, 112. For a more detailed discussion, see: Kilpatrick, *Making*, Appendix 2, at 291–320.

⁸⁷ Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 69–70.

⁸⁸ Kilpatrick, *Making*, 104–111.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 119–127.

Given these reasons, the analysis of the selection, repetition, and placement of material is suitable for the purpose of this study. However, the strategy of manipulation, as proposed by Donner, is not considered in this thesis. Manipulation is defined as the revision, abbreviation, partial omission, and combination of a source text. It is also found in the *Aghānī*, as al-Iṣfahānī quite often combines a number of *akhbār* derived from different informants to form a cohesive narrative.⁹⁰ Studying manipulation requires original texts for comparison, but such texts are not always available, partly because the works of al-Iṣfahānī's informants are lost or yet to be rediscovered. Moreover, even when we have the source text for comparison, a question emerges: is the text we have the one that was available to al-Iṣfahānī? In other words, the aural and oral transmission of the source text produced variants and different recensions. If the text available to al-Iṣfahānī was different from the one we have, then redaction (revision, abbreviation, omission *inter alia*) may have occurred in the course of transmission rather than by the hand of al-Iṣfahānī. The problem of the transmission of the text will be addressed in detail in Chapter Three, which examines the repositories of the reports available to al-Iṣfahānī in order to identify his selection.⁹¹ Overall, due to the lack of texts for comparison, consideration of the strategy of manipulation is excluded from the present application of redaction criticism.

We have explained the utility of redaction criticism, which centres on the editorial process that produced the text, yet one question remains: what kind of articles in the *Aghānī* should be subjected to such an analysis? As the *Aghānī* comprises more than

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 94–99.

⁹¹ See 3.1.

400 articles, it is impractical to examine them all. Given the research question, which calls for an investigation of the impact of sectarian inclination on the text, textual analysis will be applied to the following two kinds of articles: those about Shī'īs and those about their enemies — the material most likely to reveal al-Iṣfahānī's sectarian tendency. If al-Iṣfahānī inserts his Shī'ī perspective into the *Aghānī*, his editorial intervention will then present the partisans of 'Alī positively, and *vice versa*.⁹²

It is within the framework of these two hypotheses that this study proceeds: first, al-Iṣfahānī is a compiler and thus his perspectives on the past can be derived from his editorial activities; second, as a Shī'ī, al-Iṣfahānī normally presents his co-religionists in a favourable light and portrays anti-Shī'īs negatively. Through redaction criticism, the present study demonstrates that al-Iṣfahānī's sectarian tendency is indeed at work as one of the compiling agendas that frame the material of the *Aghānī*. Furthermore, redaction criticism not only shows that al-Iṣfahānī shapes the narrative of some articles in accordance with his sectarian perspective, but also illustrates the discourse with which he was engaged. In addition to the usefulness of redaction criticism, this thesis will establish the *Aghānī* as potential source material for future research into the kind of Shī'ism al-Iṣfahānī embraces — a problem to which we now turn.

New Light on the Development of Shī'ism

Studies on Shī'ī Islam, like much of Islamic Studies, are inevitably influenced by the

⁹² Although we have accentuated some exceptions to this dynamic, as discussed in the case of Ibn al-Mu'tazz above (on page 25), and the *Aghānī*'s multivocality (see, furthermore, Chapter Four), this hypothesis still serves as a basis for a search of Shī'ī sympathy in this multifarious compilation.

perspective of *‘ulamā’*. As the *‘ulamā’* possess the ability to transmit, interpret, and document knowledge, they are the ones who represent and remember the communities with which they are affiliated or to which they are opposed (in the case of heresiography). No doubt such sources, biased by the *‘ulamā’*, can illuminate the formation and definition of the sects — the discourse with which the scholars engage may illustrate the challenges and problems encountered by the communities in the course of their evolution — but there are blind spots.⁹³ Overdependence on heresiography may cause one to lose sight of the historical reality of the so-called sects, while the works of the *‘ulamā’* tend to view the formation of their communities in a teleological framework.⁹⁴ This teleology is what Momen observes to be the “Muslim conceptualization of a static, unchanging Islam” and an unconscious and retrospective imposition of scholars’ views onto earlier periods.⁹⁵ In other words, the labels and definitions created by the *‘ulamā’* in doctrinal writings, heresiography, and even historiography (which can be polemical, as in, for instance, Ibn Kathīr’s *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*⁹⁶) undermine the sense of the fluidity of the groups counted as Shī‘īs, whether wrongfully or otherwise. In Newman’s words, “If Shii life today is so complex, why should the past have been any different?”⁹⁷ The problematality of these labels can be illustrated by the issue of al-Iṣfahānī’s Shī‘ī affiliation.

⁹³ A close examination of the scholarly discourse has shown the challenges the Twelver Shī‘ī communities faced: Andrew Newman, *Twelver Shiism: Unity and Diversity in the Life of Islam, 632 to 1722* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013).

⁹⁴ For the problems in the heresiography, see: Wadād al-Qāḍī, *al-Kaysāniyya fī al-tārīkh wa-l-adab* (Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfa, 1974), 15–40; W.M. Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1973), 1–6; Keith Lewinstein, “The Azāriqa in Islamic Heresiography,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 54-2 (1991): 251–252.

⁹⁵ Momen, *An Introduction*, 61.

⁹⁶ For, an example of Ibn Kathīr’s polemic against Shī‘īs: Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*, ed. Ḥassān ‘Abd al-Mannān (Beirut: Dār al-Afkār al-Dawliyya, 2004), 1739.

⁹⁷ Newman, *Twelver*, 10.

According to *al-Fihrist*, by Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī (385 – 459–60/995 – 1066–7), al-Iṣfahānī was a Zaydī Shī‘ī.⁹⁸ This Zaydī label is taken for granted by a number of scholars investigating the *Aghānī* and its compiler, as well as the development of Zaydism.⁹⁹ This sectarian label is, however, problematic for two reasons. First, al-Ṭūsī is the only early source that claims this and, as one of the founding scholars of Twelver Shī‘ism countering challenges posed to his sect, he is by no means unbiased.¹⁰⁰ Second, even if we concede the validity of al-Ṭūsī’s claim, Zaydism is by no means a homogenous phenomenon in the tenth century. “To give an adequate account of the Zaydites is more difficult than to describe any other of the Islamic sects,” as Watt rightly points out.¹⁰¹ That is, his being a Zaydī itself does not inform us much about al-Iṣfahānī’s Shī‘ī perspective.

The heresiographers derive the term Zaydiyya from the revolt of Zayd b. ‘Alī and his followers,¹⁰² who, from the very beginning, did not themselves form a homogenous

⁹⁸ Al-Ṭūsī, *al-Fihrist*, 192. This view is followed by a few Twelver Shī‘ī scholars; see footnote 13.

⁹⁹ Kilpatrick, *Making*, 14–16; “Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī” in *EP*³ (S. Günther); Najam Haider, *The Origin of the Shī‘a: Identity, Ritual, and Sacred Space in Eighth-Century Kūfa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 197; *idem*, “The Community Divided: A Textual Analysis of the Murders of Idrīs b. ‘Abd Allāh (d.175/791),” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 128-3 (2008): 459–475; Patricia Crone, *Medieval Islamic Political Thought* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 100, footnote 4.

¹⁰⁰ On the life and scholarly contribution of al-Ṭūsī, see Momen, *An Introduction*, 79–80; Newman, *Twelver*, 87–96.

¹⁰¹ Watt, *The Formative*, 162.

¹⁰² Al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt al-islāmīyīn wa-ikhtilafāt al-muṣallīyīn*, ed. Muḥammad M. ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-‘Aṣriyya, 1990), vl.1, 136–137. This is also mentioned by later heresiographies: ‘Abd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq bayna al-fīraq*, ed. Muḥammad M. ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-‘Aṣriyya, 1995), 22; al-Shahrastānī, *al-Milal wa-l-niḥal*, ed. Muḥammad F. Muḥammad, 2nd ed. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1992), 153. I do not include the work of Sa‘d b. ‘Abdallāh al-Qummī because of its high level of similarity to that of al-Nawbakhtī. It is likely that al-Qummī used al-Nawbakhtī’s work as the template for his own heresiography. The alternative explanation, that al-Qummī taught al-Nawbakhtī’s work, which was recorded by the former’s students and thus included his explanations and additions, seems plausible. See the relevant discussion in: Wilferd Madelung, “Some Remarks on the Imāmī *Fīraq* Literature,” in *Shī‘ism*, ed. Etan Kohlberg (Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 2003), 53–167; ‘Abd al-Mun‘im al-Ḥafnī, Introduction to *Fīraq al-shī‘a* by al-Ḥasan b. Mūsā al-Nawbakhtī and Sa‘d b. ‘Abdallāh al-Qummī (Cairo: Dār al-Rashād, 1992), 9–10. In any case, I consulted the edition by al-Ḥafnī, who combines the two texts and marks the additions by al-Qummī in square brackets. It seems that al-Qummī by and large agrees with

group. Al-Ash‘arī mentions that Zayd b. ‘Alī was deserted by some of his supporters in Kūfa for refusing to repudiate Abū Bakr and ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb.¹⁰³ Meanwhile, amongst the groups he counts as Zaydīs, the Jārūdīs also uphold a view that is not essentially different from those who abandoned Zayd b. ‘Alī: ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib was implicitly designated (*bi-l-waṣf*) as the successor by the Prophet; people went astray and became infidels for not acting in accordance with this designation.¹⁰⁴ That is, Abū Bakr and ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb were both infidels for usurping the caliphate, which was destined for ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, and should, as a result, be repudiated and cursed. On the other side of the broad Zaydī spectrum are those who view ‘Alī as the most virtuous man (*al-aḥḍal*), but the caliphates of Abū Bakr and ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, who were less virtuous (*al-maḥḍūl*), as still acceptable, while they either repudiate ‘Uthmān — the opinion of the Sulaymānīs — or refrain from making a judgment — that of the Batrīs (or Butrīs).¹⁰⁵ Between the two extremes are different groups and sub-groups that hardly agree on the nature of the imamate and the succession to it, nor on theological issues, such as the attributes of God, nor on jurisprudence (whether the *aḥkāṃ* of Abū Bakr and ‘Umar are acceptable or not, for instance).¹⁰⁶

The heresiographers do not represent the Zaydīs as a clearly fixed group bound together by mutual beliefs. The Zaydīs are set apart from other Shī‘īs by their

al-Nawbakhtī, as far as the discussion of the Zaydī groups is concerned: al-Nawbakhtī and al-Qummī, *Firaq*, 31.

¹⁰³ Al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, vl.1, 136–137.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, vl.1, 141. This description of the Jārūdīs concurs with: al-Nawbakhtī and al-Qummī, *Firaq*, 31, 69–70.

¹⁰⁵ Al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, vl.1, 143–144; al-Nawbakhtī and al-Qummī, *Firaq*, 30, 70–71.

¹⁰⁶ Al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, vl.1, 145–150; al-Nawbakhtī and al-Qummī, *Firaq*, 18–19, 37, 48–52, 71–77, 91–92.

distance from the Ghulāt. However, even that is not always clear-cut.¹⁰⁷ The Zaydī requisites for the imam are also fairly distinct — he must be a knowledgeable and pious Ḥasanid or Ḥusaynid descendant who revolts against a tyrannical regime (as opposed to the Imāmī loyalty to the Ḥusaynid lineage).¹⁰⁸ However, these two points do not define the homogeneity of the Zaydīs. As al-Nawbakhtī notes, some Zaydīs are said to have professed the imamate of ‘Alī al-Riḍā (148–203/765–818¹⁰⁹), but then returned to the Zaydiyya after the latter’s demise.¹¹⁰ Thus, against the “classical” Zaydī tenet that any Ḥasanid or Ḥusaynid who possesses knowledge and piety and revolts against a usurper can claim the imamate, ‘Alī al-Riḍā attracted some Zaydīs, in spite of his cooperation with the “tyrant” al-Ma’mūn (r. 198–218/813–833).¹¹¹

It appears that the lack of a clear identity for the Zaydiyya is related to the complexity and fluidity of the so-called Zaydī group. The fluidity of the so-called Zaydī group probably reflects the reality of Shī‘ī believers at grass-roots level, who attached themselves to an imam or imam-like leader whenever this adherence

¹⁰⁷ Some of the Zaydīs believed in the *raj‘a*, while most of them denied it: al-Nawbakhtī and al-Qummī, *Firaq*, 70; al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, vl.1, 141. The Sulaymānī Zaydīs emerged from the death of Ismā‘īl, who was designated as the next imam by Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq, but who died before his succession: al-Nawbakhtī and al-Qummī, *Firaq*, 76–77; the followers of al-Riḍā turned to the Zaydiyya after his death: 91–92. The revolt of Ibrāhīm b. ‘Abdallāh b. al-Ḥasan rallied some support from the Mu‘tazilīs: al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, vl.1, 154; meanwhile, the figurehead of the Batrīs, al-Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ b. Ḥayy, is recognized as a reliable traditionist whose narrations are included in Muslim’s *Ṣaḥīḥ*: al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq*, 33–34.

¹⁰⁸ Al-Nawbakhtī and al-Qummī, *Firaq*, 69–70; al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, vl.1, 141; al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq*, 30–33; al-Shahrastānī, *al-Milal*, 153–154. The Imāmī polemic against the Ḥasanid imamate can be discerned in the emphasis on the specific lineage of imams, which is passed from father to son, after al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn; see: al-Kulaynī, *Uṣūl al-kāfi* (Beirut: Manshūrāt al-Fajār, 2007), vl.1, 171–186; Mohammad A. Amir-Moezzi, *The Spirituality of Shi‘i Islam: Beliefs and Practices* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 81–82. See also the polemic by Ibn Qiba against the Zaydī creeds: Hossein Modarressi, *Crisis and Consolidation in the Formative Period of Shi‘ite Islam* (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1993), 169–201.

¹⁰⁹ “‘Alī al-Riḍā” in *EP* (T. Bayhom-Daou).

¹¹⁰ Al-Nawbakhtī and al-Qummī, *Firaq*, 91.

¹¹¹ See page 46–47.

fulfilled their materialistic and spiritualistic needs and to whom scholarly definitions and polemics mattered little. As the heresiographers are mainly concerned with drawing the line between the misguided and the rightly-guided sect — the one that will attain salvation — their mission is never to give a historically accurate and reasonable outline of the formation of each sect and its doctrine.¹¹²

Recent studies that examine Zaydī doctrinal literature argue that these two divergent groups (Batrīs and Jārūdīs) transformed in the ninth century, with the defining works by al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm (d. 246/860): Zaydism became dominated by Jārūdī leanings, while the Batrīs melted into Kūfan traditionalism.¹¹³ An alternative view is that Zaydism was Batrī in the beginning and then incorporated Imāmī ritualistic practices, due to the withdrawal of Kūfan support under political pressure from the ‘Abbāsids and the resulting need to maintain its identity.¹¹⁴

No matter how Jārūdism prevailed over Batrism and became the mainstream of classical Zaydism, the fact that the Zaydī communities were scattered over the Islamic world (the Caspian region, Yemen, and the Ḥijāz) inhibited a unified Zaydī identity in the tenth century.¹¹⁵ This does not mean that there was a lack of interaction and communication amongst the Zaydīs in various regions. Al-Ṭabarī reports that al-Dā‘ī ilā al-Ḥaqq, Muḥammad b. Zayd (d. 287/900), sent a sum of

¹¹² Footnote 94.

¹¹³ “Zaydiyya” in *EP* (W. Madelung); Crone, *Medieval*, 99–100. For a summary of the studies on Zaydism and its history: Sabine Schmidtke, “The History of Zaydī Studies: An Introduction,” *Arabica* 59 (2012): 185–199; Wilferd Madelung, *Der Imam al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm und die Glaubenslehre der Zaiditen* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1965), 45–152.

¹¹⁴ Haider, *The Origin*, 189–214.

¹¹⁵ Richard T. Mortel, “Zaydi Shiism and the Hasanid Sharifs of Mecca,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 19-4 (1987): 455–472; M.S. Khan, “The Early History of Zaydī Shī‘ism in Daylamān and Gīlān,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 125-2 (1975): 301–314.

32,000 dinars to Mecca, Medina, Kūfa, and Baghdad.¹¹⁶ Zaydī imams, such as Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn (d. 411/1020) and his brother, Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn (d. c. 424/1033), once studied in Baghdad.¹¹⁷ However, as the canonisation of “classical Zaydīsm” took place at the peripheries of the Islamic world, what al-Iṣfahānī perceived as Zaydīsm in the heartland, specifically Kūfa and Baghdad, may not have been identical to the doctrines laid down by al-Nāṣir al-Uṭrūsh (d. 304/917) and al-Hādī ilā al-Ḥaqq (d. 304/917) — the eponyms of the two major Zaydī schools of jurisprudence, Nāṣriyya and Hādawiyya.¹¹⁸ This does indeed seem to have been the case, given that al-Iṣfahānī acknowledges his ignorance of Zaydī activities in Yemen and the Caspian region.¹¹⁹

Through a careful examination of al-Iṣfahānī’s *Maqātil*, the present study argues against the Zaydī label given by al-Ṭūsī. The comparison will show that al-Iṣfahānī differs from the Zaydīs not only in the comprehensiveness of his *Maqātil*, which includes the martyrs of the Ṭālibids, whereas the imamate is limited only to the descendants of al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, according to classical Zaydīsm, but also in the lack of the imamatology in al-Iṣfahānī’s overarching thought.¹²⁰ By incorporating the results derived from redaction criticism and the relevant passages in the *Aghānī* with the information found in the *Maqātil*, it is possible to understand al-Iṣfahānī’s sectarian perspective, which appears to be defined by a mild form of Shī‘ism less hostile towards most of the Companions but granting special privilege to the ‘Alids.

¹¹⁶ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad A. Ibrāhīm, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1968-1975), vl.10, 41–42.

¹¹⁷ “Zaydiyya” in *EI*² (W. Madelung).

¹¹⁸ See 1.2.1.

¹¹⁹ See 1.2.4.

¹²⁰ See 6.1.

This thesis does not aim to offer a comprehensive position on the history of Zaydism. Rather, it seeks to look beyond the *rijāl/fīraq*-literature with regard to al-Iṣfahānī's sectarian tendency. In doing so, we can understand al-Iṣfahānī's *tashayyu'* in its own right. Any sect of Islam is a dynamic and ever-evolving group trying to accommodate the *status quo* and address challenges posed by others. This, hopefully, may contribute to the study of Shī'ism in general and of the *tashayyu' ḥasan*, which constituted an important element of later Ṣūfism, in particular.¹²¹

To recapitulate these three sections, the present study investigates the *Kitāb al-Aghānī* with regard to the articulation of its compiler's sectarian agenda through redaction criticism, which examines editorial activities, specifically, the compiler's selection, repetition, and arrangement of material, in addition to their editorial remarks. The usefulness of redaction criticism lies in its emphasis on the editorial role of the author or compiler, which helps this thesis to identify the renderings of al-Iṣfahānī vis-à-vis those of his sources. The material under investigation comprises articles about the partisans of 'Alī and his offspring as well as those about the enemies of the Shī'īs. The criteria of being Shī'ī or anti-Shī'ī are determined by al-Iṣfahānī. That is, if a biographee is known by al-Iṣfahānī to have fought 'Alī or persecuted Shī'īs, they are counted as an anti-Shī'ī, no matter how other biographies label the person in question. The findings of the analyses through redaction criticism challenge the established view that the *Aghānī* is void of any Shī'ī tendency. On the other hand, the results will be used to further our understanding of al-Iṣfahānī's sectarian perspective, which maintains a mild partisanship for the 'Alids without marring the dignity of most of the Companions and is to some extent distinct from

¹²¹ Momen, *An Introduction*, 96.

Zaydīsm, against al-Ṭūsī's claim. The kind of Shī'ism that al-Iṣfahānī embraces can be contextualised in light of the career of his patron, Abū Muḥammad al-Muhallabī, whose religious policies in one way or another conform to the mild approach of al-Iṣfahānī's *tashayyu'*.

The Structure of this Thesis

This thesis proceeds in three parts. The first part, comprising Chapters One, Two, and Three, introduces the compiler, al-Iṣfahānī, the text, the *Aghānī*, and the sources, with regard to their transmission, as used by al-Iṣfahānī for the *Aghānī*. Apart from setting out the context for this research, these chapters address the hypotheses and prerequisites for a literary analysis through the use of redaction criticism. The second part — Chapters Four and Five — presents the results of the analyses, which demonstrate the presence of a Shī'ī agenda in the *Aghānī* but acknowledge al-Iṣfahānī's other editorial concerns. The third part, consisting of Chapters Six and Seven, puts the results of the analyses into a historical context, specifically in light of al-Iṣfahānī's religious ideology and the career of his patron, and possibly the dedicatee of the *Aghānī*, al-Muhallabī.

Chapter One is divided into two sections. Section one (1.1) introduces al-Iṣfahānī and other relevant matters, while section two (1.2) focuses on his sectarian affiliation. Section one (1.1) first sets the timeframe in which al-Iṣfahānī lived and then delves into his family and educational background, which to some extent relates to his Shī'ī tendencies. Finally, a discussion of the identity of the dedicatee of the *Aghānī* — in all likelihood, the Būyid vizier, Abū Muḥammad al-Muhallabī —

concludes this section. Section two (1.2) examines the Zaydī label given by al-Ṭūsī to al-Iṣfahānī. By considering the circumstances of the Zaydī states in the Caspian region and Yemen in al-Iṣfahānī's time, it can be suggested that a unified and homogenous Zaydī identity did not exist. Thus, ascribing Zaydī beliefs to someone in this period without giving a geographical location fails to characterise their belief with clarity. This chapter sets two frameworks for this thesis. First, the Shī'ī influence in the *Aghānī* is plausible, given its compiler's association with Shī'īs, including his family, teachers, and patron. Second, while al-Iṣfahānī's Shī'ī tendency is beyond doubt, this thesis proceeds on the more open-ended grounds that al-Iṣfahānī was a Shī'ī without assigning him to a particular sect.

Chapter Two introduces the *Aghānī*, its structure, and its textual problems. The first section (2.1) examines the preface to the *Aghānī* to elucidate al-Iṣfahānī's perception of his own work. Then, in sections two and three (2.2 and 2.3), it outlines the tripartite structure of the *Aghānī* and explains its textual flaws, such as lacunae and the disruption in the original order of the articles. In addition to illustrating how the *Aghānī* looks and how it was meant to have been compiled, according to al-Iṣfahānī, the purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate that the *Aghānī* is the work of al-Iṣfahānī in the sense of a *syngrammat* (a real book with definite structure and form). Despite lacking the original order, each article is likely to retain its original structure, as designed by al-Iṣfahānī. Thus, redaction criticism can be applied to each article, reflect the editorial hand of al-Iṣfahānī and perhaps indicate his motivation.

Chapter Three forms the basis for one of the approaches in redaction criticism — the examination of the selection of material. By reconstructing a pool of information that

may have been at al-Iṣfahānī's disposal, it is possible to determine what he includes or excludes. Section one (3.1) deals with the problems concomitant with oral, or aural, transmission and determines the texts that were likely to have been available to al-Iṣfahānī in the form in which we have them and which can thus be used to ascertain al-Iṣfahānī's selection of material. This section also elucidates the stance in this thesis towards the *isnāds* (chains of transmission): *isnāds* may not guarantee the factuality of the accounts but they are by no means made up by al-Iṣfahānī. Section two (3.2) reflects on the dissemination of knowledge in his time. Given al-Iṣfahānī's presence in and access to the *sūq al-warrāqīn* (book markets), where ideas and reports were circulated, the reports that cannot be established as having been available to him are not necessarily useless. Rather, this kind of report may offer insights into the discourse with which al-Iṣfahānī engaged.

Chapters Four and Five present the results of the application of redaction criticism, which support the existence of a Shī'ī version of the past in the *Aghānī*, despite other factors which may have been prioritised over al-Iṣfahānī's assertion of his sectarian perspective. Sections one (4.1) and four (4.4) of Chapter Four highlight these other agendas that determine al-Iṣfahānī's editorial decisions — the concern for genre and al-Iṣfahānī's personal preferences for some subjects may override his Shī'ī partisanship. In a similar vein, al-Iṣfahānī, as a compiler, is limited by the availability of source material, which determines his capacity for editorial intervention, as discussed in section three (4.3). That is, al-Iṣfahānī, as a compiler, can only reshape the narrative with the material at his disposal. Thus, the limits of his sources may have prevented him from articulating his views. Section two (4.2) acknowledges the limits of redaction criticism. When the source material is scarce or flawed, it is

impossible to ascertain al-Iṣfahānī's editorial role. Thus, more definite conclusions from the analysis have to be withheld.

Regardless of the conclusions from Chapter Four, Chapter Five demonstrates a Shī'ī agenda present in the *Aghānī*. This chapter is divided on the basis of how redaction criticism reveals al-Iṣfahānī's sectarian tendency in order to illustrate both the utility of this literary analysis in detail and the complexity of the *Aghānī*. Section one (5.1) examines al-Iṣfahānī's selection of material, which shows that al-Iṣfahānī deliberately excludes positive reports about the enemies of the Shī'īs while choosing those accounts that present them negatively. Section two (5.2) considers his use of special and rare sources, which, in certain contexts, are employed by the compiler to accentuate his views. In section three (5.3), al-Iṣfahānī's use of repetition, in some cases in combination with the use of special or rare sources, confirms the presence of a Shī'ī voice in the *Aghānī*, as he reiterates certain elements, for three purposes: first, to denigrate anti-Shī'īs; second, to emphasise the importance of love for 'Alī and his family; and third, to accentuate the salvation promised for *shī'at 'Alī*. Finally, section four (5.4) finds that both the profiles and al-Iṣfahānī's comments echo this overarching argument — the *Aghānī* is indeed permeated by al-Iṣfahānī's Shī'ī perspective.

Chapter Six defines al-Iṣfahānī's Shī'ism based on the evidence derived from the *Maqātil* and the *Aghānī*. The three sections (6.1–6.3) of this chapter examine al-Iṣfahānī's take on the 'Alids, the Companions (especially the first three caliphs), the

Ghulāt, Sunnīs, and his use of the term, imam.¹²² This chapter concludes that al-Iṣfahānī's Shī'ī belief entails the veneration of virtuous members of the 'Alids and a mild attitude towards the Companions, except for explicit enemies of the Shī'īs. Al-Iṣfahānī acknowledges the caliphates of Abū Bakr, 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, and 'Uthmān b. 'Affān, and holds their narration of prophetic *ḥadīth* to be valid, despite their moral defects. On the other hand, al-Iṣfahānī disparages Ghulāt beliefs while distancing himself from Imāmīs and remembering the past somewhat differently from *ahl al-Sunna*.

Building upon the conclusions from Chapter Six, Chapter Seven reflects on this specific kind of Shī'ism in the context of al-Muhallabī's career. Section one (7.1) highlights the social tension and turmoil in the decades before the Būyid takeover of Baghdad, with special regard to the development of the Ḥanbalī movement. This discord and division among various groups meant that a less offensive religious policy was required to establish the rule of outsiders like the Būyids. This is seen in the vizierate of al-Muhallabī, especially in the way he worked with various sectarian groups in Baghdad. Section two (7.2) demonstrates the parallel between al-Iṣfahānī's Shī'ī ideology and al-Muhallabī's attitude towards different sects and their contentions. Whether or not al-Muhallabī can be counted as a co-religionist of al-Iṣfahānī, the patron-client relationship between the two, when understood as a bridge

¹²² The subjects ('Alī b. al-Jahm and 'Abdallāh b. Muṣ'ab), who are examined in 6.3.3, lived in the ninth century — during which the key characteristics of Sunnīsm, such as the four caliphs thesis, had not yet been fully established — and should be counted as proto-Sunnīs (following Zaman's term). Yet, I use the term Sunnī here, because the texts on which our literary analysis is based derive from the later period. The teleological perspective of the later sources (Sunnī or not) usually does not recognize (or acknowledge) the evolution and transition from proto-Sunnīs to Sunnīs. Thus, the term proto-Sunnī is not important for our purpose; see: Crone, *Medieval*, 125–141; Muhammad Q. Zaman, *Religion and Politics under the Early 'Abbāsids: the Emergence of the Proto-Sunnī Elite* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 49–59; al-Nāshī' al-Akbar, *Masā'il al-imāma wa-muqatafat min al-Kitab al-Awsaṭ fi al-maqālāt*, ed. Josef van Ess (Beirut: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1971), 65–67; Watt, *The Formative*, 265–271.

from which al-Muhallabī reaches out and sponsors a particular group, illuminates the significance of the Shī‘ism al-Iṣfahānī embraces, which can justifiably rally the support of Shī‘īs of all kinds without necessarily offending the Sunnī majority in Baghdad.

The conclusion outlines the findings of this thesis, with emphasis on the three issues it addresses: the Shī‘ī perspective in the *Aghānī*, al-Iṣfahānī’s sectarian agenda, and the interplay between the text and its historical context. Then, it remarks on potential avenues for the future research, such as the application of redaction criticism to other compilations, investigation into al-Iṣfahānī’s co-religionists, and studies on the early Būyid period. Most importantly, the present research seeks to prompt further studies on the *Aghānī*, which hitherto has received limited scholarly attention.

Part One

Chapter One: Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī: His Life, His Beliefs, and His World

This chapter introduces al-Iṣfahānī, his life, his sectarian tendencies, his patron, and his wider context. Section one (1.1) addresses the time in which al-Iṣfahānī lived, his background, and his sectarian affiliation. It ends with a discussion of the identity of the dedicatee of the *Aghānī* — Abū Muḥammad al-Muhallabī, in all likelihood. Section two (1.2) examines the Zaydī label given to al-Iṣfahānī. Based on the development of the Zaydī polities in Yemen and the Caspian region, a homogenous Zaydī identity unified under a set of ideas did not exist in al-Iṣfahānī's time. Besides, al-Iṣfahānī seems to have distanced himself from these Zaydī communities and can in no way be identified with the so-called Ṭālibiyya, which was a Zaydī sub-sect probably active in the tenth century in Kūfa. Further, he treats the Zaydīs in his *Maqātil* apathetically. Thus, it is inaccurate to see him as a Zaydī.

1.1 Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī

Although biographical sources on al-Iṣfahānī are not lacking, the details are only found in later works and are problematic.¹²³ As a result, in this section, we will reconstruct al-Iṣfahānī's biography primarily on the basis of early or well-founded sources. In the first two subsections (1.1.1–1.1.2), we will first discuss the time in which al-Iṣfahānī lived — the first half of the tenth century. Then, we will look at his

¹²³ “Abū al-Faraj” in *Encyclopaedia Islamica* (A. Azarnoosh).

biography in detail, particularly his educational background, his career as a *kātib* (scribe), and his role as the *nadīm* (boon-companion) of the Būyid vizier, Abū Muḥammad al-Muḥallabī (291–352/903–963). The third subsection (1.1.3) will touch on al-Iṣfahānī’s sectarian affiliation, but the question of what kind of Shī‘ī al-Iṣfahānī was will be deferred to Section two (1.2). The last subsection (1.1.4) will identify the dedicatee of the *Aghānī*. It is likely that the *Aghānī* was commissioned and compiled for Abū Muḥammad al-Muḥallabī.

1.1.1. Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī: Chronology

One controversial issue relating to al-Iṣfahānī surrounds the date of his demise. The contemporary, or nearly contemporary, records of al-Iṣfahānī are found in *al-Fihrist* of Ibn Nadīm (d. 385/995 or 388/998), in al-Tanūkhī’s works, and in *Yatīmat al-dahr* of al-Tha‘ālibī. Amongst these, the only date is found in *al-Fihrist*, which claims that al-Iṣfahānī died in the 360s/970s (*sanat nayyif wa-sittīn thalāthimi’a*). This may have been a later addition, however.¹²⁴ Nonetheless, based on his personal contact with Ibn al-Nadīm and al-Tanūkhī, it is clear that al-Iṣfahānī lived in the tenth century.¹²⁵

A date, contradicting what we have in *al-Fihrist*, was given by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (392–463/1002–1071), who based his information on al-Iṣfahānī’s student, Muḥammad b. Abī al-Fawāris (338–412/950–1022).¹²⁶ According to al-Baghdādī,

¹²⁴ I would like to thank Dr. Görke for spotting this potential later insertion (Ibn Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 128). The death date only exists in Flügel’s edition, which is based on a shorter manuscript derived from Istanbul manuscripts. On the manuscripts of *al-Fihrist*, see: “Ibn al-Nadīm” in *EP*² (J. Fück); Ridā Tajaddud, introduction to *al-Fihrist*, by Ibn Nadīm, ii–iii.

¹²⁵ Ibn Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 158; al-Tanūkhī, *Nishwār al-muḥāḍara wa-akhbār al-mudhākara*, ed. ‘Abbūd al-Shālījī, 2nd ed. (Beirut: Dār Sādir, 1995), indices; *idem*, *al-Faraj ba‘da al-shidda*, ed. ‘Abbūd al-Shālījī (Beirut: Dār Sādir, 1978), indices.

¹²⁶ Al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, vl.13, 338. On Ibn Abī al-Fawāris, see: *ibid.*, vl.2, 213.

Ibn Abī al-Fawāris said that al-Iṣfahānī was born in 284/897–98 and died in 356/967.¹²⁷ Another time of death noted by Abū Nu‘aym al-Iṣfahānī, 357/967–68, is discredited by al-Baghdādī.¹²⁸ Although Ibn Abī al-Fawāris’ dates were widely accepted by subsequent biographical sources,¹²⁹ they are not uncontested.

Yāqūt (574–626/1178–1225) notices that the reports in *Adab al-ghurabā’*, by al-Iṣfahānī, attest to his activities after 356/967.¹³⁰ In one of the reports, the author describes himself as a young man (*fī ayyām al-shabība wa-l-ṣibā*) at the time of Mu‘izz al-Dawla’s death in 356/967, when al-Iṣfahānī is supposed to have died.¹³¹ If we accept al-Iṣfahānī’s authorship of *Adab al-ghurabā’* and the authenticity of all of its accounts, none of the above dates are reconcilable. However, the attribution of *Adab al-ghurabā’* to al-Iṣfahānī is also disputed in current scholarship.¹³²

It is possible to calculate the approximate dates of his birth and death through the lifespans of his students and his direct informants. As previously mentioned, al-

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, vl.13, 340.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.* Abū Nu‘aym al-Iṣfahānī, *Akhbār Aṣbahān* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Islāmī, ND), vl.2, 22.

¹²⁹ Yāqūt b. ‘Abdallāh al-Ḥamawī, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, ed. Aḥmad F. Rifā‘ī (Cairo: Maṭbū‘āt al-Ma’mūn, 1922), vl.13, 95. Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, vl.3, 308–309; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 2774; al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh*, vl.2, 253.

¹³⁰ Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, vl.13, 95–97.

¹³¹ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb Adab al-ghurabā’*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Jadīd, 1972), 83–86.

¹³² The scholars who affirm al-Iṣfahānī as the author of *Adab al-ghurabā’* include: “Abū al-Faraj” in *Encyclopaedia Islamica* (A. Azarnoosh); “Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī” in *EP* (S. Günther); Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid, *Muqaddima of Kitāb adab al-ghurabā’*, by al-Iṣfahānī, 10–16; Kilpatrick, “On the difficulty of knowing mediaeval Arabic authors: The case of Abū l-Faraj and pseudo-Iṣfahānī” in *Islamic reflections, Arabic musings. Studies in honour of Professor Alan Jones from his students*, edited by Robert G. Hoyland et al. (Oxford: Gibb Memorial Trust, 2004), 230–242; *idem*, “The *Kitāb adab al-ghurabā’* of Abū l-Farağ al-Iṣbahānī” in *La signification du bas Moyen Age dans l’histoire et la culture du monde musulman. Actes du 8me Congrès de l’Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants Aix-en-Provence 1976* (Aix-en-Provence: Édisud, 1978), 127–135. On the opposite side are: Robert G. Hoyland, “History, Fiction and Authorship in the First Centuries of Islam” in *Writing and Representation in Medieval Islam: Muslim Horizons*, ed. Julia Bray (London: Routledge, 2006), 36–39; Patricia Crone and Shmuel Moreh, The Authorship of the *Ghurabā’* in *The Book of Stranger: Medieval Arabic Graffiti on the Theme of Nostalgia*, by al-Iṣfahānī, trans. Patricia Crone and Shmuel Moreh (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2000), 128–143.

Iṣfahānī must have remained alive after his student, Muḥammad b. Abī al-Fawāris — the youngest to transmit from him — was born in 338/950.¹³³ If we assume that Muḥammad started to attend al-Iṣfahānī's lectures at the age of ten, then we may suggest that al-Iṣfahānī remained active from 348/960 onwards. Likewise, we can establish his date of birth based on the demises of his direct informants, from whom al-Iṣfahānī quotes, using phrases such as *akhbaranī* and *ḥaddathanī* (one informed me and one narrated to me). The informant known to have died at the earliest date is Yaḥyā b. 'Alī b. Yaḥyā al-Munajjim, who lived from 241/855 to 300/912.¹³⁴ Again, if we postulate that al-Iṣfahānī transmitted from Yaḥyā when he was at least ten years old, we can infer that he was born before 290/902. Therefore, al-Iṣfahānī's intellectual activity took place in the first six decades of the tenth century, from about 290/902 to 348/960. It is also worth noting that no source places his death earlier than 356/967.

1.1.2. Family, Education, and Career

Although the contemporary and earliest biographical sources do not provide us with definite dates for al-Iṣfahānī's life, they shed light on his origins and career, in particular, his association with the Būyid vizier, Abū Muḥammad al-Muhallabī (291–352/903–963).

One of al-Iṣfahānī's *nisbas*, al-Umawī, denotes a membership of the first caliphal dynasty, the Umayyads (r. 41–132/662–750).¹³⁵ Another *nisba*, al-Iṣfahānī (one

¹³³ Al-Aṣma'ī, *Abū al-Faraj*, 81–85; al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, vl.2, 213–214.

¹³⁴ Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 68–69.

¹³⁵ While most of the sources agree that al-Iṣfahānī was amongst the offspring of the last Umayyad caliph, Marwān b. Muḥammad (72–132/691–750), Ibn al-Nadīm claimed that he was a descendant of

traced back to Isfahan), may have nothing to do with his birthplace (*pace* some of the secondary studies).¹³⁶ Rather, this ascription is more likely to be an indication of familial origin. According to Ibn Ḥazm (384–456/994–1064), some descendants of the last Umayyad caliph, Marwān b. Muḥammad, settled in Isfahan and Egypt. The uncle of al-Iṣfahānī's father, 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Aḥmad, was a high-ranking scribe (*kātib*) in Sāmarrā' during the reign of al-Mutawakkil (r. 232–247/847–861). Al-Iṣfahānī's uncle, al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad, also a scribe in Sāmarrā', was born during the time of al-Mutawakkil.¹³⁷ Hence, it appears that al-Iṣfahānī's family — associated with the scribal service of the Abbasid caliphate — had been settled in Sāmarrā' or Baghdad for more than fifty years by the time of his own life. Family members from his maternal side, Āl Thawāba, had also settled either in Sāmarrā' or Baghdad and worked as scribes. Moreover, whenever al-Iṣfahānī makes reference to his paternal relatives, they all bear the *nisba* al-Iṣfahānī.¹³⁸ Thus, it seems that the attribute is an indication of family origin rather than al-Iṣfahānī's birthplace. It is likely that al-Iṣfahānī had never been to Isfahan himself, but this city may have left its influence on his family. Isfahan was the refuge of various 'Alids and their supporters in the Umayyad period.¹³⁹ The Umayyad branch, from which al-Iṣfahānī came, may have been attracted by these 'Alid groups when it settled in Isfahan. The familial tie with the Shī'ī group was perhaps then inherited by al-Iṣfahānī.¹⁴⁰

Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik (72–125/691–743): *al-Fihrist*, 127. Al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, vl.13, 337; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 2774; al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh*, vl.2, 251.

¹³⁶ Al-Ziriklī, *al-A'lām*, vl.4, 278; Rotter, *Und der Kalif*, 7; Aḥmad Amīn, *Ẓuhr al-Islām* (Cairo: Sharikat Nawābiḡh al-Fikr, 2009), 248–249; Sallūm, *Dirāsāt*, 9. This misconception, according to Azarnoosh, was first disseminated by Ṭāshkubrīzādah (d. 968/1560) and was thereafter followed by the modern scholars; see: "Abū al-Faraj" in *Encyclopaedia Islamica* (A. Azarnoosh).

¹³⁷ Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamharat ansāb al-'arab*, ed. Muḥammad 'A. Hārūn, 5th ed. (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, ND), 107. Khalafallāh, *Ṣāhib*, 33–60.

¹³⁸ Khalafallāh, *Ṣāhib*, 23–25; "Abū al-Faraj" in *Encyclopaedia Islamica* (A. Azarnoosh).

¹³⁹ Newman, *Twelver*, 37.

¹⁴⁰ See footnote 138.

Although his birthplace is not known, according to al-Iṣfahānī's own references in the *Aghānī* and *Maqātil*, it is certain that he once studied in Kufa. This is further supported by the fact that many of his teachers were Kufan scholars, such as Muḥammad al-Qattāt, 'Alī b. al-'Abbās al-Maqānī¹⁴¹, and al-Ḥusayn b. Abī al-Aḥwaṣ.¹⁴¹ His education in Kufa left a perceptible imprint on his Shī'ī martyrology, *Maqātil*, written in 313/925.¹⁴² It is likely that al-Iṣfahānī had settled in Baghdad with his family sometime after 300/913–14, as he mentions in the *Aghānī*: “Abū al-Fayyāḍ came to us in Baghdad after the year 300, and our companions related from him some reports (*qadima 'alaynā bi-Madīnat al-Salām ba'da sana thalāthimi'a*)...”¹⁴³ Except for trips to other cities, such as Antakya,¹⁴⁴ he may have remained in Baghdad thereafter; his house, according to Yāqūt, was located on the banks of the Tigris between the Sulaymān and Tigris gates.¹⁴⁵

While al-Iṣfahānī established himself as a learned scholar and taught in teaching circles,¹⁴⁶ he may also have made his living as a scribe. This is not surprising, given his families' scribal connections, but the details of his *kātib* activities are rather opaque. Although both al-Tanūkhī and al-Baghdādī refer to al-Iṣfahānī with the attribute, *kātib*, they mention nothing of where he worked or for whom.¹⁴⁷ The details of his job as a scribe only come later, with Yāqūt, many of whose reports about al-Iṣfahānī prove problematic. For instance, a report from Yāqūt claims that al-

¹⁴¹ “Abū al-Faraj” in *Encyclopaedia Islamica* (A. Azarnoosh).

¹⁴² *Ibid.*; Kikpatrick, *Making*, 25–26.

¹⁴³ “Abū al-Faraj” in *Encyclopaedia Islamica* (A. Azarnoosh); Kilpatrick, *Making*, 16. Both refer to : Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vl.23, 21.

¹⁴⁴ “Abū al-Faraj” in *Encyclopaedia Islamica* (A. Azarnoosh); al-Iṣfahānī narrated from 'Abd al-Malik b. Maslama al-Qurashī al-Hishāmī in Antakya: *al-Aghānī*, vl.13, 85.

¹⁴⁵ Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, vl.13, 104.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, vl.13, 129–130 ; “Abū al-Faraj” in *Encyclopaedia Islamica* (A. Azarnoosh); Khalafallah, *Ṣāhib*, 168–169; al-Aṣma'ī, *Abū al-Faraj*, 73–85; 'Āṣī, *Abū al-Faraj*, 24–30.

¹⁴⁷ Al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, vl.13, 337 ; al-Tanūkhī, *al-Faraj*, vl.2, 334; *idem*, *Nishwār*, vl.1, 18.

Iṣfahānī was the scribe of Rukn al-Dawla (d. 366/976) and mentions his resentment at Abū al-Faḍl b. al-‘Amīd (d. 360/970).¹⁴⁸ However, the very same report is mentioned by Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (active fourth/tenth century¹⁴⁹) in his *Akhlāq al-wazīrayn*, where the aforementioned scribe of Rukn al-Dawla is identified as Abū al-Faraj Ḥamd b. Muḥammad, not Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī.¹⁵⁰

Thus, it is hard to know with certainty to what extent al-Iṣfahānī was engaged in *kātib* duties. Nevertheless, we can still confirm his association with the vizier, Abū Muḥammad al-Muhallabī, with much more confidence, regardless of the late and often spurious stories in Yāqūt’s *Mu‘jam*. The firm relationship between al-Iṣfahānī and al-Muhallabī is supported by al-Iṣfahānī’s poetry collected by al-Tha‘ālibī: half of the fourteen poems are panegyrics dedicated to al-Muhallabī.¹⁵¹ According to al-Tanūkhī, he frequently received rewards from the vizier.¹⁵² In addition to these biographic sources, al-Iṣfahānī’s own work, *al-Imā’ al-shawā’ir*, refers to the vizier — presumably, al-Muhallabī — as his dedicatee.¹⁵³ This all demonstrates the patron-client relationship between al-Iṣfahānī and al-Muhallabī.

To sum up, al-Iṣfahānī was an Umayyad (in all likelihood, a descendant of Marwān b. Muḥammad, the last Umayyad caliph). His paternal family appears to have moved from Isfahan to Sāmarrā’ and Baghdad, during or before the caliphate of al-Mutawakkil (r. 232–247/847–861). His family, on both sides, served as scribes in

¹⁴⁸ Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, vl.13, 110–111.

¹⁴⁹ “Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī” in *EP*² (S.M. Stern).

¹⁵⁰ “Abū al-Faraj” in *Encyclopaedia Islamica* (A. Azarnoosh); Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī, *Akhlāq al-wazīrayn*, ed. Muḥammad T. al-Ṭanjī (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1992), 421–422.

¹⁵¹ Al-Tha‘ālibī, *Yatīmat*, vl.3, 127–131.

¹⁵² Al-Tanūkhī, *Nishwār*, vl.1, 74 ; “al-Tanūkhī” in *EP*² (H. Fāhndrich).

¹⁵³ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Imā’ al-shawā’ir*, ed. Jalīl al-‘Aṭīyya (Beirut: Dār al-Niḍāl, 1984), 23.

Sāmarrā', a profession in which al-Iṣfahānī himself seems to have been engaged, but we know very little as to where and with whom he worked. In addition, he made a living by teaching and from the patronage of Abū Muḥammad al-Muḥallabī, to whom he dedicated his works and poetry. We have outlined al-Iṣfahānī's life in relation to his family, education, and career. Now, we turn to his sectarian affiliation.

1.1.3. Al-Iṣfahānī as a Shī'ī

Al-Iṣfahānī's Shī'ī identity is attested in al-Tanūkhī's comment, as quoted earlier.¹⁵⁴ This rare combination between the Umayyads and Shī'ism may appear unusual to the compilers of biographical dictionaries.¹⁵⁵ However, these seemingly contradictory attributes can nonetheless be reconciled by the fact that the Āl Thawāba, to whom al-Iṣfahānī was related from the maternal side, were Shī'īs.¹⁵⁶ Furthermore, his paternal, Umayyad lineage, as previously noted, had settled in Isfahan before moving to Iraq, where they too may have been influenced by Shī'ism. It was in Isfahan, as al-Iṣfahānī himself also noticed, that an alliance between the Umayyads and the Ṭālibīds took shape during the revolt of 'Abdallāh b. Mu'āwiya (died c.131/748–749).¹⁵⁷ Different Shī'ī groups, including Zaydīs, Ismā'īlīs, and Imāmīs had fled to Iranian cities such as Shiraz, Isfahan, and Qom and were active from the ninth century onwards.¹⁵⁸ Thus, it is not incomprehensible that al-Iṣfahānī's grandfather, Muḥammad, cultivated a close friendship with the Ṭālibid notables, who used to

¹⁵⁴ Page 19.

¹⁵⁵ Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 2774; *idem*, *Mizān*, vl.5, 151; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh*, ed. Muḥammad Y. al-Daqqāq (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1987), vl.7, 302.

¹⁵⁶ Kilpatrick, *Making*, 15–16; Khalafallāh, *Ṣāhib*, 57–60.

¹⁵⁷ Khalafallāh, *Ṣāhib*, 33–40, 124–25. For the alliance between Ibn Mu'āwiya and some Umayyads, see: al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.12, 183. For the dates, see: "'Abdallāh b. Mu'āwiya" in *EF*³ (A. Borrut).

¹⁵⁸ Newman, *Twelver*, 36–37.

attend the gatherings held in his house.¹⁵⁹ Furthermore, the historically hostile relations between the Shī'īs and the Umayyads, against whom numerous Shī'ī revolted, may have been erased by the lapse of time. This is clearly acknowledged by al-Iṣfahānī, as he relates the apologia of the Zaydī Imām, Muḥammad b. Zayd al-ʿAlawī (d. 287/900 or 289/902¹⁶⁰), to a descendant of Yazīd b. Muʿāwiya, who was attached to the former in Ṭabaristān.¹⁶¹

Al-Iṣfahānī's Shī'ī tendency is widely accepted by the Sunnī compilers of his biography, but they give no attention to the specific Shī'ī sect to which he adhered.¹⁶² Al-Ṭūsī (385 – 459–60/995 – 1066–67¹⁶³) was the first compiler to describe al-Iṣfahānī as Zaydī.¹⁶⁴ It is hard to evaluate the validity of al-Ṭūsī's classification, as this involves how being a Zaydī would have been defined in the tenth century, which will be treated in section two (1.2). Nevertheless, al-Iṣfahānī's work, *Maqātil al-Ṭālibīyīn*, explicitly expresses his sympathy for the Shī'īs and for Ṭālibīds in particular.¹⁶⁵ Hence, it is certain that al-Iṣfahānī was a Shī'ī or, at least, that one of his works manifests a clear Shī'ī tendency.

Against this background, this research's line of inquiry emerges: does this sectarian affiliation also influence the *Aghānī*? A review of al-Iṣfahānī's audience may give some insights into this question. The *Aghānī* itself, as a book of songs, does not limit

¹⁵⁹ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 547 ; “Abū al-Faraj” in *Encyclopaedia Islamica* (A. Azarnoosh); Kilpatrick, *Making*, 15–16; Khalafallāh, *Ṣāhib*, 57–60.

¹⁶⁰ “Muḥammad b. Zayd” in *EP*² (Ed.).

¹⁶¹ Al-Tanūkhī, *al-Faraj*, vl.2, 334–337. For the reconciliation between the ʿAlids and the Umayyads, see: page 143, especially, footnote 395.

¹⁶² See page 19.

¹⁶³ The dates: “al-Ṭūsī” in *EP*² (M. A. Amir-Moezzi).

¹⁶⁴ Al-Ṭūsī, *al-Fihrist*, 192.

¹⁶⁵ Günther, *Quellenuntersuchungen*, 5–6.

its audience to the Shī'īs. However, al-Iṣfahānī appears to have had an addressee when he compiled the materials, as he explicitly states in the preface of the *Aghānī* that the impetus behind his compilation project was the inquiry of one of the chief men (*ra'īs min ru'asā'inā*).¹⁶⁶ In what follows, we turn to the question of the dedicatee of the *Aghānī* and his impact on al-Iṣfahānī's compilation.

1.1.4. The Anonymous Dedicatee of the *Aghānī*

According to the biographical sources, there are three candidates who might be the dedicatee of the *Aghānī*: first, the Ḥamdānīd emir, Sayf al-Dawla (r. 333–356/945–967); second, the *kātib* of Mu'ayyid al-Dawla and man of letters, al-Ṣāhib b. 'Abbād (326–385/938–995); third, al-Iṣfahānī's patron and the vizier to Mu'izz al-Dawla, Abū Muḥammad al-Muhallabī.

Al-Iṣfahānī is connected to Sayf al-Dawla by two reports claiming that al-Iṣfahānī took fifty years to complete the *Aghānī* and gave it to Sayf al-Dawla, who rewarded him with one thousand dinars. The problem with these famous reports is that they are not found in the contemporary sources, but only in Yāqūt's *Mu'jam* and Ibn Khallikān's (608–681/1211–1282) *Wafayāt*.¹⁶⁷ Given al-Tha'ālibī's scholarly interests in the Ḥamdānīd and Baghdādī literary circles (he devotes much attention to al-Mutanabbī), it is significant that he does not mention al-Iṣfahānī's relationship to Sayf al-Dawla in *Yatīmat*.¹⁶⁸ Moreover, the text of Yāqūt's report referring to Sayf al-

¹⁶⁶ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.1, 16.

¹⁶⁷ Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, vl.3, 307; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, vl.13, 97; Halm, *Shiism*, 50; Momen, *An Introduction*, 76; Seeger A. Bonebakker and Michael Fishbein, *A Reader of Classical Arabic Literature* (Atlanta: Lockwood Press, 2012), 128.

¹⁶⁸ Khalafallāh, *Ṣāhib*, 102–103; al-Tha'ālibī, *Yatīmat*, vl.1, 37–346.

Dawla's one-thousand-dinar reward is corrupt.¹⁶⁹ The connection between al-Iṣfahānī and Sayf al-Dawla can be dismissed on the grounds of the hostile relations between the Ḥamdānids and the Būyids. The Būyid emir, Mu'izz al-Dawla (r. 334–356/945–967), was engaged in the war with the Ḥamdānid Nāṣir al-Dawla (d. 351/968), as soon as he entered Baghdad in 334/945. Although a treaty was concluded by the two sides after that, the tensions and conflicts remained.¹⁷⁰ It is hard to imagine that al-Iṣfahānī, the recipient of the patronage of the Būyid vizier, al-Muhallabī, would seek a connection with the Ḥamdānids. It is possible that al-Iṣfahānī presented his work to Sayf al-Dawla after the death of al-Muhallabī. However, before the vizier's death, Sayf al-Dawla had suffered from severe defeats at the hand of the Byzantine emperor, Nicephorus Phocas, and lost his stronghold, Aleppo.¹⁷¹ Hence, it is unlikely that Sayf al-Dawla had further resources to patronize al-Iṣfahānī. As a result, in all likelihood, Sayf al-Dawla was not the *ra'īs* to whom al-Iṣfahānī refers.

The patronage of the second candidate, al-Šāḥib b. 'Abbād, is also implausible. The report identifying al-Šāḥib as the dedicatee of the *Aghānī* comes from Ibn Zākūr's (d. 1120/1708) commentary on *Tazyīn qalā'id al-'iqyān*.¹⁷² This, again, is a late source. Furthermore, al-Šāḥib did not hold any important position before the death of al-Muhallabī. In other words, if the *Aghānī* was completed before al-Muhallabī's death,

¹⁶⁹ Khalafallāh, *Šāḥib*, 101, 105–110: the misconception that al-Iṣfahānī gave his *Aghānī* to Sayf al-Dawla came from a misreading of the text in *Mu'jam al-udabā'*; the original initially mentioned that Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī al-Maghribī made an abridgement of the *Aghānī* and gave it to Sayf al-Dawla Abū al-Ḥasan Ṣadaqa Fakhr al-Dīn b. Bahā' al-Dawla, whom Yāqūt mistook for the Ḥamdānid Sayf al-Dawla. This account is then followed by a comment of al-Šāḥib b. 'Abbād and a dialogue between al-Muhallabī and al-Iṣfahānī and then returns to the words of Abū al-Qāsim, who states that he only made one copy of this work in his life and that that is the one given to Sayf al-Dawla. See also: Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, vl.13, 97–98. Although Khalafallāh admits that his reading is conjectural, he rightly points out the obscurities in this text.

¹⁷⁰ Miskawayh, *Tajārīb al-umam wa-ta'āqub al-himam*, ed. Sayyid K. Ḥasan (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2003), vl.5, 277–290, 320–324.

¹⁷¹ Kilpatrick, *Making*, 19–20; "Sayf al-Dawla" in *EF* (Th. Bianquis).

¹⁷² Khalafallāh, *Šāḥib*, 111.

al-Šāhib, as a low-ranking scribe, could not have been the ideal dedicatee.¹⁷³ On the other hand, al-Šāhib became the vizier to Mu'ayyid al-Dawla in 366/976, after al-Iṣfahānī died, according to Ibn Abī al-Fawāris.¹⁷⁴ If al-Iṣfahānī was still alive and al-Šāhib was at the zenith of his career, why al-Iṣfahānī did not announce him as his patron in the preface is incomprehensible.¹⁷⁵ Taking these factors into consideration, the idea of a patron-client relationship between al-Iṣfahānī and al-Šāhib should also be rejected.

The last candidate is al-Muhallabī, whose patronage towards and association with al-Iṣfahānī are well-attested in the contemporary sources. Apart from this steady relationship, al-Iṣfahānī dedicated his panegyrics, his *al-Imā' al-shawā'ir*, and another lost work of his, *Kitāb Manājīb al-khiṣyān*, to the vizier.¹⁷⁶ Furthermore, al-Muhallabī was a poet himself and a patron of musicians.¹⁷⁷ These factors all strengthen the possibility that al-Muhallabī was the dedicatee of the *Aghānī*.

If al-Muhallabī was the unnamed *ra'īs*, his anonymity in the preface of the *Aghānī* makes sense. Al-Muhallabī had lost the favour of Mu'izz al-Dawla by the end of his life. Shortly after his death, his property, as well as “everything he had given to his family, his associates, his entourage, and even his ferryman and servants, was confiscated. All of them were arrested and jailed.”¹⁷⁸ To avoid suspicion from the

¹⁷³ For the details on al-Šāhib's career, see: Maurice A. Pomerantz, “A Political Biography of al-Šāhib Ismā'īl b. 'Abbād (d. 385/995),” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 134-1 (2014): 1–23.

¹⁷⁴ “Ibn 'Abbād” in *EP*² (Cl.Cahen and Ch. Pellat).

¹⁷⁵ “Abū al-Faraj” in *Encyclopaedia Islamica* (A. Azarnoosh); Khalafallāh, *Šāhib*, 110–114.

¹⁷⁶ Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, vl.13, 100; Kilpatrick, *Making*, 19.

¹⁷⁷ Al-Tha'ālibī, *Yatīmat*, vl.2, 269–285.

¹⁷⁸ Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 278.

Būyids, al-Iṣfahānī may have omitted the name of his patron.¹⁷⁹ Although it is not possible to know with certainty, al-Muhallabī seems to be the most plausible dedicatee.

What this means for the present study is that the most likely patron and addressee of the *Aghānī* is al-Muhallabī, a man of Shī‘ī tendency in the service of the Shī‘ī regime, that is, the Būyids.¹⁸⁰ It is hard to say to what extent al-Muhallabī was devoted to the Shī‘ī faith (personal conviction is known to God alone). Unlike al-Iṣfahānī, whose Shī‘ī identity may have been rooted in both sides of his family, little is known about al-Muhallabī’s early life. He was a descendant of Qabīṣa b. al-Muhallab b. Abī Ṣufra and suffered from poverty before he entered into the Būyids’ service.¹⁸¹ However, this Shī‘ī identity was by no means insignificant for al-Muhallabī, at least in the public sphere. After al-Muhallabī had become the vizier, it is known that he, fearing the allegation of withdrawing from Shī‘ism (*tark al-tashayyu‘*), had to release a group of Ghulāt.¹⁸² In other words, *tashayyu‘* is an official label which al-Muhallabī tenaciously retains while working for the Būyids. This then leads back to this thesis’ argument. As the *Aghānī* was probably patronized by a Shī‘ī chiefman and certainly compiled by a Shī‘ī *adīb*, it is not implausible that a Shī‘ī agenda is present in such a work ostensibly about music and poetry.

We have outlined al-Iṣfahānī’s biography, looking especially at the time in which he lived, his career, his sectarian affiliation, and the patron of his *Aghānī*. Now, in the

¹⁷⁹ Khalafallāh, *Ṣāhib*, 119–120.

¹⁸⁰ Kabir, *The Buwayhid*, 201–202.

¹⁸¹ Al-Tha‘ālibī, *Yatīmat*, vl.2, 265–267.

¹⁸² Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 239–240. Further details : 7.2.

next section, we will examine the Zaydī label given to him by al-Ṭūsī and discuss the sectarian delineation in al-Iṣfahānī's time.

1.2. Al-Iṣfahānī as a Zaydī?

As mentioned above, the primary sources hardly disagree on al-Iṣfahānī's Shī'ī tendency, but little is said of the kind of Shī'ism he professes, apart from al-Ṭūsī, who claims him to be a Zaydī. Yet, al-Ṭūsī's label should not be taken for granted, not only due to the lack of corroboration in other sources, but also because the Zaydī communities from the ninth century onwards developed into two separate polities, respectively in the Caspian region and Yemen. If al-Ṭūsī's attribution is accepted, then the question of which Zaydī community al-Iṣfahānī was affiliated to needs to be answered for this label to offer any meaningful insight. However, al-Ṭūsī's attribution should probably, rather, be rejected, or, at least, not regarded as useful in understanding al-Iṣfahānī's Shī'ī tendencies.

In what follows, an outline of the history of the two Zaydī states until al-Iṣfahānī's time in the mid-tenth century will be given in subsection one (1.2.1), to show that the Zaydīs in the given period are anything but homogenous. Being a Zaydī itself would not give much insight into the religious views of al-Iṣfahānī, although al-Ṭūsī's label does correctly suggest al-Iṣfahānī to be a non-Imāmī. Subsection two (1.2.2) will introduce al-Iṣfahānī's work, *Maqātil al-Ṭālibīyīn*. Based on the evidence derived from the *Maqātil* and from biographical sources, subsection three (1.2.3) will highlight his distance from the Imāmīs, perhaps even his conflict with them. Finally, the fourth subsection (1.2.4) will argue that he cannot be identified with any kind of

Zaydī, either. Based on the overarching structure, the contents — *par excellence*, al-Iṣfahānī's lukewarm attitude towards the Zaydīs —, and the editorial notes in al-Iṣfahānī's *Maqātil*, it can be established that al-Iṣfahānī does not belong to the obscure Zaydī group, the Ṭālibiyya, perhaps active in Kūfa in the tenth century. Furthermore, given his ignorance of the activities of Zaydī imams in the Caspian region and in Yemen, al-Iṣfahānī also cannot be counted as a member of these communities of Zaydīs.

1.2.1. Zaydī Polities in the Caspian Region and Yemen

In 250/864, an 'Alid revolt led by al-Ḥasan b. Zayd (d. 270/884) expelled the Ṭāhirids from the Caspian region and took over Āmul and, soon, the whole of Ṭabaristān. Yet al-Ḥasan b. Zayd and his successor and brother, Muḥammad b. Zayd (d. 287/900), were constantly checked by the surrounding regimes: the 'Abbāsids, the Ṣaffārids, and the Sāmānids.¹⁸³ With the death of Muḥammad b. Zayd, the polity was brought to an end. Then, in 301/914, availing himself of the disorderly situation in the region, al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī al-Uṭrūsh (d. 304/917) revolted against the Sāmānid governor, Su'lūk. Despite his victory over the Sāmānids, al-Uṭrūsh's rule was soon weakened by internal division; his general and relative, al-Ḥasan b. al-Qāsim (d. 316/908¹⁸⁴), staged a coup against him, but was later appointed as his successor. Nevertheless, the disputes between al-Ḥasan b. al-Qāsim (and then his son, Abū

¹⁸³ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vl.9, 271–276, 307–308, 406–409, 474, 501, 506, 508–510, 512, 666; vl.10, 41–42, 44, 81–82; Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīkh*, ed. Khalīl Shaḥḥāda and Suhayl Zakkār (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 2000), vl.3, 357, 387; al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab wa-ma'ādin al-jawhar*, ed. Yūsuf A. Dāghir (Beirut: Dār al-Andalus, 1978), vl.4, 68–69, 91, 96; al-Ṣābī, "*Akḥbār*", 18–23; "al-Ḥasan b. Zayd" in *EP*² (Fr. Buhl); "Muḥammad b. Zayd" in *EP*² (Ed.).

¹⁸⁴ Al-Ṣābī, "*Akḥbār*", 37.

‘Abdallāh al-Mahdī, who died in 360/970¹⁸⁵) and al-Uṭrūsh’s descendants, fuelled by external threats and interventions, were endemic in the Zaydī state in the Caspian region. Al-Uṭrūsh is recognised as a Zaydī imam, under the title al-Nāṣir, and, with his devotion to dogma and jurisprudence, as the founder and eponym of the Nāṣiriyya school of Zaydīs.¹⁸⁶

Meanwhile, a Ḥasanid, named Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn (245–298/859–911), was invited to Yemen by the leader of the Yemenī tribes, Abū al-‘Atāhiyya al-Hamadhānī, as the arbitrator of the tribal feuds of 280/893–94. Receiving their allegiance, he issued his *da‘wa* under the title of al-Hādī ilā al-Ḥaqq and, after consolidating his control over Ṣa‘da, he extended his authority to Najrān in 284/897, but the fickle loyalty of the Yemenī tribes and the Qarāmiṭa invasion impeded him from conquering the north. After his death, his sons succeeded him under the titles al-Murtaḍā (d. 310/922) and al-Nāṣir (r. 298–322/910–934). His doctrines laid the ground for the Hādawī school, which was further elaborated by his sons and the imams in the Caspian regions, in particular, al-Mu‘ayyad (d. 411/1020) and al-Nāṭiq bi-l-Ḥaqq (d. 424/1033).¹⁸⁷

The two Zaydī states, holding different views on theological and jurisprudential matters, did not generate a unified Zaydī identity, as Madelung describes: “Mit an-Nāṣir al-Uṭrūš und al-Hādī sind also nicht nur zwei räumlich getrennte zaiditische Staaten entstanden, sondern auch zwei in Dogmatik, Recht und Kultus geschiedene

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 42.

¹⁸⁶ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vl.10, 149; ‘Arīb, *Ṣilat Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, ed. Muḥammad A. Ibrāhīm (Beirut: Dār Suwaydān, ND), 47; Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīkh*, vl.3, 457; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vl.6, 480–482, 495; al-Ṣābī, “*Akḥbār*”, 23–43; “Ḥasan al-Uṭrūsh” in *EF*² (R. Strothmann); Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 244.

¹⁸⁷ Al-Nāṭiq bi-l-Ḥaqq, *al-Ifāda fī tārīkh al-a‘imma wa-l-sāda* (Ṣa‘da: Maktabat Ahl al-Bayt, 2014), 86–100, 115–117; “al-Hādī ilā al-Ḥaqq” in *EF*² (W. Madelung).

Gemeinden.”¹⁸⁸ Before being invited to Yemen, al-Hādī and his family had come to Āmul, where he had refused to eat the meat prepared by the locals, as slaughter at the hand of those who believed in anthropomorphism and predestination (*ahl al-tashbīh wa-l-jabr*) was unlawful.¹⁸⁹ Implicitly, the majority of Zaydīs in Ṭabaristān believed in anthropomorphism and in predestination, which were condemned by al-Hādī.¹⁹⁰ Furthermore, al-Hādī, under the influence of the Imāmīs, strongly disavowed Abū Bakr and ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, whom al-Nāṣir al-Uṭrūsh treated with respect.¹⁹¹ In the Caspian region, the Zaydīs were further divided into the followers of the Nāṣirī and Qāsimī doctrines.¹⁹² Despite the imam Abū ‘Abdallāh Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Mahdī’s (304–359/916–970) attempt at reconciling the two schools by promoting the recognition of the equal legitimacy of the two states and announcing that the teachings of al-Qāsim and al-Nāṣir were equally correct, the division remained; in the time of al-Nāṭiq bi-l-Ḥaqq, many chastised those who acknowledged their equal legitimacy, while the Nāṣirīs in particular were convinced that only their doctrine was right.¹⁹³ Only in the twelfth century did the political, cultural, and religious unification of the two communities begin, with knowledge transfer from northern Iran to Yemen.¹⁹⁴

Geographical distance did not mean the complete isolation of the two states. The influence of the Hādawiyya was brought to the Caspian communities by Abū al-

¹⁸⁸ Madelung, *Der Imam*, 168.

¹⁸⁹ Al-Nāṭiq, *al-Ifāda*, 91–92.

¹⁹⁰ The Nāṣiriyya is anti-Mu‘tazilī; see: “Zaydiyya” in *EI*² (W. Madelung).

¹⁹¹ Madelung, *Der Imam*, 167–168.

¹⁹² The two main Zaydī schools are Qāsimiyya and Nāṣiriyya; from the former emerges Hādawiyya. Crone, *Roman, Provincial and Islam Law: the Origins of the Islamic Patronate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 20.

¹⁹³ Madelung, *Der Imam*, 174–175.

¹⁹⁴ Hassan Ansari and Sabine Schmidtke, “Between Aleppo and Ṣa‘da: The Zaydī Reception of the Imāmī Scholar Ibn al-Biṭrīq al-Ḥillī,” *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 4 (2013): 159–160.

‘Abbās al-Ḥasanī and his students, al-Mu’ayyad and al-Nāṭiq.¹⁹⁵ It is noteworthy that al-Hādī, Abū al-‘Abbās al-Ḥasanī, and the latter’s students all once studied in Baghdad.¹⁹⁶ That said, the Zaydī label, when applied to al-Iṣfahānī’s time, does not denote a homogenous identity, neither in heresiography nor in reality.¹⁹⁷ It seems that what makes al-Iṣfahānī a Zaydī is less a well-defined Zaydī dogma to which al-Iṣfahānī adhered than his not being an Imāmī, in the view of al-Ṭūsī. That is, because al-Iṣfahānī was not an Imāmī, he was left in the category of the Zaydīs. In this regard, al-Ṭūsī is correct. Evidence derived from al-Iṣfahānī’s *Maqātil* and the biographic sources implies his distance from and, perhaps, conflict with the Imāmīs. The following two subsections give an overview of the *Maqātil* and, then, based on this work, explain how al-Iṣfahānī is different from the Imāmīs.

1.2.2. *Maqātil al-Ṭālibīyīn*

The *Maqātil al-Ṭālibīyīn* is one of al-Iṣfahānī’s surviving works, a historical-biographical compilation concerning the descendants of Abū Ṭālib, who died under the following circumstances: being killed, poisoned to death in a treacherous way, on the run from the governmental persecution, or confined to death.¹⁹⁸ Al-Iṣfahānī does not explain the motivation behind this compilation nor mention any dedicatee, but the *Maqātil* literature was rather common, amongst Shī‘īs particularly, before al-Iṣfahānī and he used many works of this genre as sources for the *Maqātil al-Ṭālibīyīn*.¹⁹⁹ However, he gives an overview of his work, in terms of

¹⁹⁵ Madelung, *Der Imam*, 172–182.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 172; “al-Hādī ilā al-Ḥaqq” in *EP* (W. Madelung).

¹⁹⁷ See page 46, the works of al-Nawbakhtī and al-Ash‘arī, al-Iṣfahānī’s senior contemporaries, *par excellence*.

¹⁹⁸ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 24; “*Maqātil al-Ṭālibīyīn*” in *Encyclopaedia Islamica* (A. Bahramian).

¹⁹⁹ Günther, “*Maqātil Literature*,” 200–205.

its editorial principles and agenda, in the preface.

According to the preface, the *Maqātil* is arranged in chronological order, rather than by the virtue or the precedence of its subjects. Moreover, al-Iṣfahānī emphasises that he will only mention reports about those who were “praiseworthy in their conduct and rightly guided in their belief (*maḥmūd al-ṭarīqa wa-sadīd al-madhhab*),” rather than “those who violated these, deviated from the way of their family and ancestors, or who revolted in corruptive and destructive manners (*lā man kāna bi-khilāf dhālika aw ‘adala ‘an sabīl ahlihi wa-madhāhib aslāfihi aw kāna khurūjuhu ‘alā sabīl ‘ayth wa-ifsād*).”²⁰⁰ Nevertheless, al-Iṣfahānī does not always comply with this prerequisite, as he includes a few Ṭālibids whose morality he questions.²⁰¹ At the end of the introduction, al-Iṣfahānī also apologizes for his inability to access information about the remote regions. Following al-Iṣfahānī’s plan, his work begins with the first Ṭālibī martyr, Ja‘far b. Abī Ṭālib, and ends in the year of the compilation — Jumādā I 313/August 925.²⁰²

In terms of structure, the *Maqātil* can be divided into three parts: those who were killed before the ‘Abbāsīd period, those who were killed during the ‘Abbāsīd period, and a list al-Iṣfahānī quotes from Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Ḥamza. The first part, in chronological order but without specifying the reigning caliph, starts with Ja‘far b. Abī Ṭālib, killed during the time of the Prophet, and finishes with the entry on ‘Ubaydallāh b. al-Ḥusayn, at the end of which al-Iṣfahānī interposes: “These are all

²⁰⁰ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 24–25.

²⁰¹ There are exceptions, however, as we will see in the discussion below: 1.2.4 and 6.3.2; see also Appendix One.

²⁰² Al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 24–25.

the reports about the demises which came to us in the Umayyad era, except for the controversial ones.”²⁰³ The second part is further divided on the basis of the caliphates, from al-Saffāḥ to al-Muqtadir. The third part is preluded with al-Iṣfahānī’s reminder: “Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Ḥamza mentions a group of the Ṭālibids, who were not executed by the government (*sulṭān*); he did not offer the dates of their death. Thus, I relay what he said without being responsible for the mistake, error, or negligence.”²⁰⁴ The *Maqātil* ends with al-Iṣfahānī’s epilogue, which re-states the date of the work’s completion (that is, 313/925) and reiterates the apology in relation to missing the latest information about the Ṭālibids in Yemen and Ṭabaristān.²⁰⁵

The total number of subjects included in the first two parts is 146; with Ja‘far, ‘Alī, al-Ḥasan, and al-Ḥusayn excluded, 20 are Ja‘farid (the offspring of Ja‘far b. Abī Ṭālib), 7 ‘Aqīlid (‘Aqīl b. Abī Ṭālib), 16 ‘Alids (non-Ḥasanid and non-Ḥusaynid offspring of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib), 52 Ḥasanids, 43 Ḥusaynids, apart from an ‘Uthmānid (the only exception in the *Maqātil*²⁰⁶), and three unidentified.²⁰⁷ For each biographical entry, al-Iṣfahānī gives the full name, the lineage (sometimes adding the maternal side), less often the virtues and personal traits of the given subject and other material al-Iṣfahānī thinks noteworthy, for example, the prophetic *ḥadīth*.²⁰⁸ Then, al-Iṣfahānī gives the account of the death, which more often than not constitutes the end

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 159.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 552.

²⁰⁵ This is a curious statement, as al-Iṣfahānī does mention some of the activity of al-Ḥasan b. Zayd in Ṭabaristān, which had been addressed in another book of his, but perhaps he meant the most recent information. *Ibid.*, 491, 565.

²⁰⁶ Günther, “*Maqātil* Literature,” 206.

²⁰⁷ I do not include the third part (the list by Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Ḥamza) for two reasons: first, it is not the work of al-Iṣfahānī and thus it is not up to him who is included and who is not; secondly, the genealogy given in this part is not complete and thus it is hard to determine the subject’s lineage. Appendix One.

²⁰⁸ Appendix One.

of the entry. Sometimes poetry for or by the subject is attached.²⁰⁹ The *Maqātil* was adduced by many Shī‘ī and non-Shī‘ī compilers of the following centuries.²¹⁰

1.2.3. Al-Iṣfahānī as a non-Imāmī

The comprehensive structure of the *Maqātil* — giving the Ḥasanids as well as Ḥusaynids credit for their merits and virtues equally, without favouring any one of the two²¹¹ — may have hit a nerve among the tenth-century Imāmī compilers, who struggled to define their dogma of the imamate by responding to the challenge and polemic from the Ḥasanids.²¹² In this regard, al-Iṣfahānī’s impartial treatment excludes him from the Imāmī circle, and may help to make sense of the label given to him by al-Ṭūsī.

In addition, al-Iṣfahānī is critical of the Imāmīs’ vision of history. In his account of Abū al-Sarāyā’s revolt, al-Iṣfahānī refrains from using an Imāmī source, ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Nawfalī, due to his Imāmī fanaticism:

I may mention a bit from [his] narrations and what is needed. Because ‘Alī b. Muḥammad believed in the imamate (*kāna yaqūl bi-l-imāma*), his sectarian fanaticism (*al-ta’aṣṣub*) drove him to be wrongful in what he narrates [...] Thus, I depend on the narration of someone who is far from his behaviour in this regard, that is, the narration

²⁰⁹ Günther, “*Maqātil* Literature,” 205–206; “*Maqātil al-Ṭālibīyīn*” in *Encyclopaedia Islamica* (A. Bahramian).

²¹⁰ “*Maqātil al-Ṭālibīyīn*” in *Encyclopaedia Islamica* (A. Bahramian); “Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī” in *EI*³ (S. Günther).

²¹¹ Many Ḥasanids are presented positively and evaluated highly by al-Iṣfahānī; for instance, Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh (al-Nafs al-Zakiyya), his father, ‘Abdallāh b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Hasan, Muḥammad b. Ṣāliḥ, and Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm, who revolted with Abū al-Sarāyā: *Ibid.*, 167, 207, 425, 480. See Appendix One.

²¹² See footnote 108.

We have neither much information about al-Nawfalī's life nor his account of Abū al-Sarāyā. Yet, being an Imāmī in his time (alive in approximately the first half of the third/ninth century) means that his belief in the imamate of 'Alī al-Riḍā (d. 203/818) and possibly an affiliation with the ninth and tenth imams, Muḥammad al-Taḳī (d. 220/835) and 'Alī al-Naḳī (d. 254/868). During this time, the notion of *naṣṣ* — designation by the Prophet of 'Alī passed down to the latter's sons and offspring — took shape and became the central creed of the later Imāmī Shī'īs.²¹⁴ It is imaginable that the position of 'Alī al-Riḍā, who was appointed by al-Ma'mūn (r. 198–218/813–833) as his successor in 201/816, was precarious in face of the memory of Abū al-Sarāyā's (executed in 200/815) revolt under the 'Alid banner. In this context, it is likely that al-Nawfalī, as an Imāmī convinced of the imamate of al-Riḍā and his successors, felt obliged to present an Imāmī version of the story. This version of the story, probably imbued with the Imāmī ethos and polemic, is excluded by al-Iṣfahānī. On one hand, by alerting his readers to the potential problem and the lack of authenticity in al-Nawfalī's account, al-Iṣfahānī establishes the credibility of his reports, which rely on Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, who was appointed by Abū al-Sarāyā as the market inspector of Kūfa and is one of the narrators of Zayd b. 'Alī's *aḥādīth*.²¹⁵ On the other hand, he takes a stance against Imāmī propaganda and distances himself from the Imāmīs.

²¹³ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 424. It is noteworthy that Naṣr b. Muzāḥim is, however, not identified in Imāmī *rijāl*-works as a Zaydī: al-Ṭūsī, *al-Fihrist*, 171–172; al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī* (Beirut: Sharikat al-A'lamī, 2010), 410.

²¹⁴ Günther, "al-Nawfalī's lost History: the Issue of a ninth-century Shi'ite source used by al-Ṭabarī and Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 36-2 (2008): 256–257.

²¹⁵ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 435; Zayd b. 'Alī, *Musnad al-Imām Zayd* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, ND), 59, *passim*.

The non-Imāmī Shī'ī tendency of al-Iṣfahānī, then, serves as the context for a critique by al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥusayn al-Nawbakhtī (320–402/932–1012), who accuses al-Iṣfahānī of plagiarism and dishonesty. According to Abū 'Abdallāh al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim b. Ṭabāṭabā al-'Alawī:

Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥusayn al-Nawbakhtī says: “Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī was the most deceitful person. He used to enter the booksellers’ market while it was abundant and the shops full of books. Then he bought a lot of books and brought them home. All his narrations come from them [books].”²¹⁶

Regardless of the authenticity of this report and whether al-Iṣfahānī indeed copied from books without *ijāzāt* (permissions of transmission), the fact that the critic is a member of Banū Nawbakht arouses suspicion.²¹⁷ Banū Nawbakht ascended to power with the vizier of al-Mu'tamid (r. 256–284/870–892), Ismā'īl b. Bulbul (d. 278/892), and, from the beginning of the tenth century, promoted a Mu'tazilī-Shī'ī confluence that “argued for the doctrine of the Imamate in the absence of the Imam, and laid the groundwork for the assumption of authority over community doctrine and practice by scholars who adhered to and were versed in such rationalist theology” with the aim of ensuring the interests of the Imāmī community *vis-à-vis* Sunnīs and non-Imāmī Shī'īs.²¹⁸ The critic, al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥusayn al-Nawbakhtī, falls exactly in this category, as he is known as a Mu'tazilī Shī'ī.²¹⁹ Thus, the above report may have been more than a slander delivered against al-Iṣfahānī and his scholarly integrity.

²¹⁶ Al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, vl.13, 339.

²¹⁷ This kind of accusation was not uncommon: for example, Aḥmad b. al-Ṣalt (d. 902), one of the biographers of Abū Ḥanīfa, was accused of having “claimed to know books by audition from their authors, but he had actually bought them from book dealers.” See: Robinson, *Islamic*, 176.

²¹⁸ Newman, *Twelver*, 42–43. On the role of Banū Nawbakht in the Shī'ī communities in Baghdad, see: Halm, *Shiism*, 35–39.

²¹⁹ Al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, vl.8, 253–254.

Rather, it was a polemic against al-Iṣfahānī as a non-Imāmī Shīʿī, who expresses disapproval of Imāmī propaganda in his *Maqātil*.

Building upon the above evidence for al-Iṣfahānī's attitude to the imams and his relations with Imāmī Shīʿīs, it can be established that al-Ṭūsī's label is correct in the sense that Zaydīs are the Shīʿīs outside of the circle of Imāmīs, whose tenets and propaganda do not convince al-Iṣfahānī. However, that is the limit of the utility of al-Ṭūsī's label. Al-Iṣfahānī is not an Imāmī, but this does not make him a Zaydī (or, at least, the label “Zaydī” may not have meant very much), as will be shown in the next subsection.

1.2.4. Al-Iṣfahānī as a non-Imāmī and non-Zaydī

It can be argued for three reasons that al-Iṣfahānī cannot be identified with a Zaydī of any sort. First, it does not seem that al-Iṣfahānī was counted as a source or authority by the Zaydīs themselves. While this is an *argumentum ex silentio* and overlooks the fact that many Zaydī works remain to be discovered and published,²²⁰ al-Iṣfahānī's *Maqātil* does not offer an ideal history in accordance with the Zaydī vision, from a Zaydī imam's perspective. The eleventh-century Zaydī imam al-Nāṭiq bi-l-Ḥaqq, keen to establish the “orthodox” Zaydī imams, underscores how his approach differs from the previous compilers who touch on the *sīra* of the ʿAlids; this, perhaps, includes al-Iṣfahānī:

This is the collection of the great books, in which we begin with the reports about the rightly guided imams, in whom God obligates imamate belief and to whom God obligates

²²⁰ Schmidtke, “The History,” 185–199.

obedience, without the rest of the offspring [of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib], who followed the practice of commanding right and forbidding wrong (*dūna alladhīna intahajū manhaj al-amr bi-l-ma‘rūf wa-l-nahy ‘an al-munkar*) and revolted against tyrants without claiming the imamate [...]. The people of the *akhbār* and *tārīkh* who compiled books about the *mubayyaḍa* [‘Alids, in contrast to *musawwada*, the ‘Abbāsids] and collected the reports about those who revolted among them did not distinguish these imams from those who imitated commanding right and forbidding wrong (*lam yumayyizū al-a‘imma minhum ‘amman salaka maslak man ya‘mur bi-l-ma‘rūf wa-yanhā ‘an al-munkar*). As the purpose of these compilations is to retell the accounts of the revolts among them in the days of the Banū Umayya and Banū al-‘Abbās, instead of elucidating the previous imams’ circumstances and those to whom obedience is obligatory among the pure people of this family (*ahl hādhā al-bayt al-ṭāhirīn*). They [the people of *akhbār* and *tārīkh*] were either non-Zaydīs, who were not concerned about this matter [differentiating the imams from others] or adherents to their own *madhhab*, who failed to offer a complete explanation [...]²²¹

For the latter, “adherents to their own *madhhab*”, al-Nāṭiq is probably referring to the different Zaydī sects, each of which has its lineage of “orthodox imams”; for instance, for the Qāsimīs, al-Nāṣir al-Uṭrūsh is the imam after al-Hādī, but the Nāsirīs hold al-Uṭrūsh as more excellent.²²² It is unlikely that al-Iṣfahānī is being categorised among the latter and thus identified with any of these sects, for reasons that will be demonstrated below. Thus, it is plausible that, in al-Nāṭiq’s view, al-Iṣfahānī is of the former — the non-Zaydīs who happened to have compiled something about imams as well as other members of *ahl al-bayt*.

Second, while the Zaydīs limit the candidacy for the imamate to the descendants of al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, al-Iṣfahānī’s *Maqātil* includes all the descendants of Abū Ṭālib.²²³ This comprehensiveness, however, does not identify al-Iṣfahānī with the so-

²²¹ Al-Nāṭiq, *al-Ifāda*, 17.

²²² Madelung, *Der Imam*, 173.

²²³ Al-Ḥusayn b. Badr al-Dīn, *al-‘Iqd al-thamīn fī ma‘rifat rabb al-‘ālamīn*, ed. Markaz al-Nūr li-l-

called Ṭālibiyya, a group that believes that the imamate was open to all the descendants of Abū Ṭālib and venerated Zayd b. ‘Alī and ‘Abdallāh b. Mu‘āwiya equally. According to Madelung, the Ṭālibiyya constituted a sect of the Zaydīs and remained active in Kūfa until the tenth century.²²⁴ Although Kūfa leaves a discernible influence on al-Iṣfahānī and many Kūfans are his sources, affiliating al-Iṣfahānī with this group is problematic.²²⁵ Madelung cites a papyrus studied by Abbott as the evidence, which mentions a group named *Ṭālibiyya* with its leader Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb.²²⁶ However, this papyrus is badly damaged and contains many lacunae.²²⁷ The passages, which are understood by Madelung and Abbott as expressing the Ṭālibiyya’s equal veneration for Zayd and Ibn Mu‘āwiya, state:

Recto

[...]

3 Among that which we have brought together for you is a summary of the reports about ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib — God be merciful to him. He obeyed God before they did

4 and he obeyed God after they (ceased to do so). He was tried as no (other) man of sorrows was tried and he was afflicted as no (other)

5 man of grief was afflicted. Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb and his fellow brothers of the Ṭālibīyah defend him (against detractors)

6 but falsehood has distracted their attention from him (Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb and his defense). As to the summary of the reports about the descendants of ‘Alī, verily

[...]

Verso

[...]

9 (and) the best of (all of) us. And had not deliverance been sought from them by the two,

Dirāsāt wa-l-Buḥūth (Ṣa‘da: Maktabat al-Turāth al-Islāmī, 1995), 51–52; see also page 46.

²²⁴ Madelung, *Der Imam*, 47, footnote 22, in particular. Crone seems to believe that al-Iṣfahānī is a member of this group without giving any evidence beyond citing Madelung’s view: *Medieval*, 100, footnote 4. Although Madelung does not mention al-Iṣfahānī’s affiliation with the Ṭālibiyya, he told me in person that he believed that is the case.

²²⁵ Page 64.

²²⁶ Madelung, *Der Imam*, 47, footnote 22.

²²⁷ Nabia Abbott, *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri I: Historical Text* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), 100–101.

Zaid ibn ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥusain

10 and ‘Abd Allāh Abū Ja‘far Mu‘āwiyah ibn Ja‘far, the aid of both of them would be certainly have been sought by

11 the eloquent, and they would have raised both of them above all orators. That is why they said (of them) “generous

12 in zeal and with a family tradition of generosity.” I have (herewith) placed before you a summary of the narrative in remembrance

13 of the family of the Messenger (of God) [...] [...] ²²⁸

The passages in verso 9–12, according to Abbott, indicate “that the author of the text belonged to the Zaidite sect, which advocated equality among the descendants of Abū Ṭālib as against any claim to superiority by ‘Alī or any of his descendants.”²²⁹ It seems that Abbott, in her attempt to make the papyrus readable, reads too much into the text. The given passages at most underscore the equal eloquence and generosity of Zayd b. ‘Alī and Ibn Mu‘āwiya, but in no way the equality of all. Moreover, the context does not show whether the idea was embraced by the Ṭālibiyya in recto 5. The information in this papyrus is not enough to assert what kind of doctrine this group embraced. Furthermore, even if we accept the reading of Abbott and Madelung, al-Iṣfahānī does not subscribe to this view, as he explicitly shows his aversion to Ibn Mu‘āwiya in both the *Maqātil* and the *Aghānī*.²³⁰ In other words, al-Iṣfahānī’s treatment of the descendants of Abū Ṭālib does not relate him to any of the Zaydī sects, including the Ṭālibiyya.

Third, an examination of al-Iṣfahānī’s editorial notes in the *Maqātil* shows his

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 101–102. The text, including bracketed material, is Abbott’s translation, but the omission (in square brackets) in Line 13 and elsewhere has been rendered by me.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 105.

²³⁰ See 6.3.2.

distance from the *da‘wa* activities in the Caspian region and in Yemen.

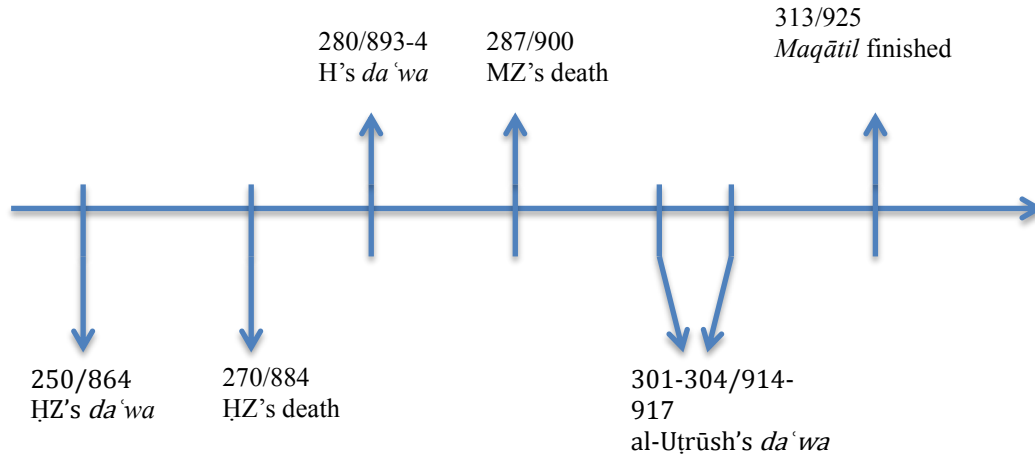


Figure 1.2. Timeline

HZ—al-Ḥasan b. Zayd; MZ—Muḥammad b. Zayd; H—al-Hādī ilā al-Ḥaqq (Yahyā b. al-Ḥusayn)

The timeline above illustrates that al-Iṣfahānī's *Maqātil* was finished after the establishment of the Zaydī states in the two regions, particularly, the *da‘wa* issued by al-Uṭrūsh and al-Hādī. While al-Iṣfahānī includes an account about the demise of Muḥammad b. Zayd, who was killed in the war against the Sāmānids,²³¹ he admits his lack of access to the latest developments in Yemen and the Caspian region in the epilogue of the *Maqātil*: “[...] although a group of Āl Abī Ṭālib have currently seized and rule parts of Yemen and Ṭabaristān, their reports are not available to us, due to the scarcity of information that is transmitted to us [...]”²³² That is to say, al-Iṣfahānī, deliberately or not, is isolated from the Zaydī communities and the doctrines they promoted in these regions. As a result, he cannot be affiliated with the Zaydīs there, as he was ignorant of their activities.

²³¹ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 542–543; another reference by al-Iṣfahānī to Muḥammad b. Zayd is quoted: al-Tanūkhī, *al-Faraj*, vl.2, 334–337.

²³² *Ibid.*, 565.

In addition, al-Iṣfahānī's attitude towards the Zaydīs in the *Maqātil* does not reveal an obvious partisanship. The term Zaydiyya first appears in the *Maqātil*, referring to the supporters of Zayd b. 'Alī (75–122/694 or 695–740).²³³ It seems that the Zaydīs felt a special loyalty towards Zayd's sons. Although they followed the revolt led by Ibrāhīm b. 'Abdallāh b. al-Ḥasan (97–145/716–763) in Baṣra, the person who could mobilize the Zaydīs was 'Isā b. Zayd (d. 168/784).²³⁴ Ibrāhīm's revolt also points to the particular locality of the Zaydīs. Whereas the supporters of his brother, Muḥammad (al-Nafs al-Zakiyya, d. 145/762), in the Ḥijāz were not given a specific name, Abū Ḥanīfa, inviting Ibrāhīm to Kūfa, said that the Zaydīs there could support him.²³⁵ Meanwhile, in Baṣra, where Ibrāhīm decided to stay in the end, there was a division between the Baṣrans and the Zaydīs. When Ibrāhīm tried to rally the Zaydīs' support, the Baṣrans refused and proposed to expel them from the city.²³⁶ This implies that the Zaydīs' geographical distribution was centred on Kūfa and did not reach Baṣra at that time (or, at least, according to what is recalled by al-Iṣfahānī and his sources). Apart from Kūfa, Zaydī presence is also to be found in Baghdad. 'Alī b. al-'Abbās is said to have come to Baghdad in search of Zaydī support, during the caliphate of al-Mahdī (r. 158–169/775–785); later, two 'Alids, Aḥmad b. 'Isā b. Zayd and al-Qāsim b. 'Alī, were rescued by Baghdādī Zaydīs, when they were confined by al-Rashīd (r. 170–193/786–809).²³⁷ The support of Zaydīs was available to both the Ḥusaynids and the Ḥasanids.²³⁸ However, the Zaydīs did not unconditionally support any 'Alid revolt; for instance, 'Alī b. Zayd, a Ḥusaynid, failed to mobilize the

²³³ The dates: "Zayd b. 'Alī" in *EP* (W. Madelung); al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 137.

²³⁴ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 288, 299, 308, 373.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 206–262, 314.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 317.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 342, 493.

²³⁸ For instance, *ibid.*, 501; Appendix One.

Zaydīs, because they disliked his *madhhab*, either his belief or his conduct.²³⁹ It seems that Zaydīs, in al-Iṣfahānī's view, amounts to a group of certain theological and ethical principles, which he never explains fully, however. In terms of theology, it seems that al-Iṣfahānī's Zaydīs were not fond of Mu'tazilism, for which they may have deserted Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim (died after 219/834).²⁴⁰ During wartime, the Zaydīs were against attacking by night (*tabyīt*) and Abū al-Sarāyā (d. 200/815) was condemned by Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm (173–199/789–815) for doing so.²⁴¹

To sum up how al-Iṣfahānī perceives Zaydīs in the *Maqātil*, it seems that the Zaydīs derived from the revolt of Zayd b. 'Alī, as the heresiographers claim.²⁴² They were mainly located in Kūfa and Baghdad. Their distinguishing features, according to al-Iṣfahānī, seem to agree with the heresiography: they follow both Ḥasanid and Ḥusaynid leaders who revolt against tyrants. However, they are more than a blind throng rebelling with any 'Alid. They seem to have shared a collective value system as to theological and ritual issues which determine their loyalty to a rebellious imam but these are not specified clearly in the *Maqātil*. Overall, al-Iṣfahānī seems to agree with the definition in the heresiography on the basic contours of the Zaydīs, such as their origin and their embrace of both Ḥasanid and Ḥusaynid leaders. However, he does not offer any insight into the spiritual perspectives of this group, except for cursory references, such as those to their opposition to the Mu'tazilism during the revolt of Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim.

²³⁹ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 528.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 465–466.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 434. However, their insistence on this point may have been unpragmatic, as shown during the revolt of Ibrāhīm b. 'Abdallāh: *ibid.*, 296.

²⁴² Page 46.

Due to the ambiguity of the term Zaydī (both as defined by the heresiographers, including al-Iṣfahānī himself, and in reality) and al-Iṣfahānī's apathy towards the group he calls Zaydiyya, instead of attributing any specific label to al-Iṣfahānī, it would be more accurate to describe al-Iṣfahānī's sectarian tendency as non-Imāmī and non-Zaydī Shī'ī. By not imposing the categories conceived by the heresiographers — in this case, al-Ṭūsī's label, — on al-Iṣfahānī and understanding his perspectives as preserved in his works, we are free from the presuppositions on one hand. On the other hand, by breaking the rigid lines drawn up by the heresiography, it becomes possible to posit that al-Iṣfahānī and his sectarian belief existed in a dynamic context in which Shī'īs (of any kind) continued to change, evolve, and re-define themselves. Thus, the following chapters will refer to al-Iṣfahānī's sectarian tendency as Shī'ī. Although this designation lacks precision, it allows more room for re-evaluating the validity of the heresiography and understanding al-Iṣfahānī's sectarian outlook as it was.

Conclusion

This chapter presents al-Iṣfahānī's life and sectarian affiliation. Section one (1.1) first set out the time in which al-Iṣfahānī lived, which, though problematic, can still be calculated based on the dates of his teacher and student (1.1.1). Then, we outlined his familial background, his educational experience, and his career as a *kātib* and *nadīm* (1.1.2). In the third subsection (1.1.3), we also mentioned that al-Iṣfahānī was a Shī'ī — a fact well noted by the biographical sources — and that the Shī'ī belief was probably inherited from his family, on both the paternal and maternal sides. Building on this and on the conclusion that the *Aghānī*, in all likelihood, was dedicated to the

Shī'ī vizier, al-Muhallabī (as discussed in 1.1.4), our inquiry into a Shī'ī agenda in the *Aghānī* makes sense.

Following this, section two (1.2) addressed the question of what kind of Shī'ī al-Iṣfahānī may have been. The Zaydīs in the tenth century did not constitute a coherent group, as the communities in the Caspian region and Yemen held different views in theology and jurisprudence, as outlined in subsection one (1.2.1). Al-Ṭūsī's Zaydī label is only valid in the sense that al-Iṣfahānī was not an Imāmī, based on his impartial treatment of the Ṭālibids, his caution against an Imāmī source — al-Nawfalī — and his conflict with a member of Banū Nawbakht (1.2.2-1.2.3). This, however, does not make al-Iṣfahānī any kind of Zaydī, as discussed in the fourth subsection (1.2.4). As the Zaydīs, as categorized by the heresiographers and in reality, are by no means homogenous nor well-defined, sectarian labels, including al-Ṭūsī's, cannot be used to locate an individual or a group within the community. Such labels do not give a clear sense of what is meant by being a Zaydī, not to mention the possibility of back-projection and anachronism. Given that framing al-Iṣfahānī within a Zaydī category sheds little light on the more specific aspects of al-Iṣfahānī's sectarian tendency, such as his views on the nature of the imamate and the conflicts within the *umma* after the Prophet's death, this thesis will proceed on the assumption that al-Iṣfahānī is a Shī'ī without presupposing any membership of a specific sect.

Chapter Two: *Kitāb al-Aghānī*: Its Structure, Textual Problems, Authorship, and Manuscripts

The *Kitāb al-Aghānī* (*The Book of Songs*) is an immense compilation, comprising twenty-four volumes. It contains 477 articles, including the biographies of poets and musicians of different periods in addition to historical material.²⁴³ The *Aghānī* preserves the songs, their melodic modes, their composers, and the biographies of the poets whose poetry serves as the lyrics of the songs, either in their original form or following their adaptation by the composers. The *Aghānī* has a preface, partially by an unknown writer and partially by al-Iṣfahānī, and its structure can be divided into three parts. In this Chapter, in section one (2.1), we will present the preface of the *Aghānī*, which illustrates the purpose of the compiler and his treatment of materials. Section two (2.1) explains the structure of the *Aghānī*. Section three (2.3) focuses on textual problems in the *Aghānī* with regard to its authorship — to what extent it can be ascertained that it is the work of al-Iṣfahānī as a *syngrammat* (a real book with definite structure and form).

2.1. The Preface of the *Aghānī*

This section first addresses the textual ambiguities in the preface of the *Aghānī* and

²⁴³ The total number of the articles is based on the index volume of the edition of the *Aghānī* that I use, which includes a *fihrist al-tarājim*: vl.25, 655–671. It should be noted the actual number is slightly higher, as, in the third part of the *Aghānī*, a song is sometimes followed by a short article without being given a separate title and thus not counted in this *fihrist*. For instance, this *fihrist* does not count the article about Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī’s governorship in Kūfa, though this article, with its introductory song and independent content, should be seen as separate; see: al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.12, 107–111. Fleischhammer gives the number as 482, but his calculation does not include the articles such as that of Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī either and counts the preface of the *Aghānī*; thus, I do not adopt his calculation here. Kilpatrick, in Appendix 2 of her book (*Making*, 291–320), lists all the articles based on the division of introductory songs, but does not give the total number of the articles.

the possibility of interpolation or revision by an unknown copyist or editor (pseudo-Iṣfahānī, hereafter). That is, in the current printed edition of the *Aghānī*, the preface can be divided into two parts: one by pseudo-Iṣfahānī and the other by al-Iṣfahānī. Although a part of the preface was not originally written by al-Iṣfahānī, it is still informative in terms of the compiler's plan of compilation, as its key points conform closely to al-Iṣfahānī's editorial notes and comments throughout the whole *Aghānī*. After demonstrating the utility of pseudo-Iṣfahānī's preface, we will examine al-Iṣfahānī's editorial principles.

The preface of the *Aghānī* is probably truncated, as noted by Sallūm.²⁴⁴ First, there is no opening formula (for example, the *basmala* and praise for His Prophet). Al-Iṣfahānī seems to use these phrases habitually in introductions, as illustrated in his other extant works.²⁴⁵ That said, these opening formulae are vulnerable to the whims of copyists and so their absence does not necessarily constitute evidence of significant truncation.

Perhaps more substantive evidence is provided by the preface itself: "This book is compiled by 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Qurashī the *kātib*, known as al-Aṣbahānī."²⁴⁶ This statement is written by a third person as opposed to the later part of the preface, which begins "Said the compiler of this book (*qāla mu'allif hādhā al-*

²⁴⁴ Sallūm suggests that the inserted text was written by Yāqūt; however, he does not provide any supporting evidence: *Dirāsāt*, 25–26. The problem in the preface is also noted by Kilpatrick, *Making*, 32.

²⁴⁵ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 27–28; *idem*, *al-Imā'*, 23–24; another lost work of al-Iṣfahānī, *Nuzhat al-mulūk wa-l-a'yān fī akhbār al-qiyān wa-l-mughanniyyāt al-dawākhil al-ḥisān*, is catalogued by Ḥājī Khalīfa, according to whom this work starts with praise for Allāh, see: *Kashf al-ẓunūn 'an asāmī al-kutub wa-l-funūn*, ed. Sharaf al-Dīn Yāltqāyā and Rif'a B. al-Kilīsī (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1941–1943), vl.2, 1947.

²⁴⁶ Both Arabic words, *Aṣbahān* and *Iṣbahān*, refer to Isfahan: Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-buldān* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1977), vl.1, 206–210.

kitāb),” and which is followed by the statements voiced by a narrator in the first person plural, for instance, “Perhaps those who browses that [*i.e.* this work] will disagree with our decision against [...] (*la ‘alla man yataṣaffaḥu dhālika yunkir tarkanā taṣnīfahu*).”²⁴⁷ This change of voice seems suspicious and may be indicative of textual interpolation. This disturbance in the preface, as well as other textual problems, to some extent correlate to the manuscript history, which will be addressed further in Section Three (2.3).

Despite these issues, the preface by pseudo-Iṣfahānī is useful as an overview of the *Aghānī*’s structure and of the arrangement of its articles. Thus, we will look at the contents of pseudo-Iṣfahānī’s preface in detail and then demonstrate its utility.

Pseudo-Iṣfahānī first describes the compiler’s contributions, including: first, the song and poetry collection; second, clarification of the poetic metres, melodic indications of songs and their attributions and, finally, explanations for the obscurities in grammar and philology.²⁴⁸ Pseudo-Iṣfahānī then sums up the contents and the arrangement of the reports in the *Aghānī*:

He does not include every song ever sung in this book, for he had already compiled a book extracted from the reports and including all the songs of early and recent times. He depends on what he found to be edifying reports — reports of poets, singers, or occasions for which songs or poems are composed — which are suitable to mention alongside songs. He tries to be as concise as possible and to avoid redundancy and the proliferation of futile information. He presents in each section of that with a few similar reports, suitable passages which, when the reader reflects on them, carry the reader continuously from one benefit to another and moves him between earnestness

²⁴⁷ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.1, 13–14.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, vl.1, 13.

and jesting amongst traditions, reports, biographies, poetry which is connected to the renowned tribal sagas and their related reports, stories of pre-Islamic kings as well as the caliphs of the Islamic era [...] He begins with The Hundred Songs chosen for the Commander of the Faithful, al-Rashīd, may God the Exalted have mercy on him. They [The Hundred Songs] were the songs which he [al-Rashīd] ordered Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī, Ismā‘īl b. Jāmi‘, and Fulayḥ b. Abī al-‘Awra’ to select for him. Then, they [The Hundred Songs] were presented to al-Wāthiq, may God have mercy on him, who enjoined Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm to replace the less qualified amongst the selected songs with what he thought better and more worthy of being chosen. So he [Ishāq] did. He [the compiler] attached to this section [The Hundred Songs] the songs which were not selected by the aforementioned musicians [*viz.* Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī, Ismā‘īl b. Jāmi‘, and Fulayḥ b. Abī al-‘Awra’] but which are highly regarded by the experts of this profession, the songs which combine the ten melodic modes, three chosen songs in the Ramal melodic mode (*al-armāl al-thalātha al-mukhtāra*) [...] He [the compiler] continues with the songs of the caliphs and their descendants and follows up with all the songs which are related to a noteworthy story and informative speech (*thumma bisā‘ir al-ghinā’ alladhī ‘araḥa lahu qiṣṣatan tustafād wa-ḥadīthan yustaḥsan*) [...] He marks each poem adapted into a song with “Song” (*ṣawt*) to indicate that it is made into melody and thus differentiated from others [verses]. It is frequent that, amongst these songs and their reports, are poems composed in the similar meaning and adapted into songs, which are neither on the list of The Hundred Songs nor of the arranged categories (*al-ajnās al-murattaba* [possibly referring to the collections of songs after The Hundred Songs]). Mentioning these poems together is unavoidable because, if they are separated, it causes either discontinuity between them and their related reports or their repetition.²⁴⁹

Pseudo-Iṣfahānī describes the themes of reports included in the *Aghānī* and its tripartite structure: first, the Hundred Songs; secondly, the songs of the royal musicians; thirdly, the selected songs accompanied with noteworthy reports. In addition, he also observes the editorial principles of al-Iṣfahānī — for instance, to be concise, to avoid redundancy, to include the earnest and jesting themes and to select the noteworthy and informative reports.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, vl.1, 13–14.

It is not known whether pseudo-Iṣfahānī's preface is a digest based on the lost part of al-Iṣfahānī's original preface, or his analysis based on his reading of the *Aghānī*. Nonetheless, pseudo-Iṣfahānī's observations tally with the overarching schema of the whole work. The tripartite structure is obvious, since the first and second parts of the *Aghānī* are separated by al-Iṣfahānī's prefaces, while the third part — though without any preface — is clearly distinguished from the second part by its contents.²⁵⁰

In terms of selection and placement of material, al-Iṣfahānī's editorial notes seem to adhere to the principles noted by pseudo-Iṣfahānī. For example, when addressing the exchange of lampoons between Ibn Mayyād and Ḥakam al-Khuḍrī, al-Iṣfahānī mentions Ḥakam's rhymed prose (*sajʿ*) against his opponent, but he quotes only a few lines to demonstrate how mediocre it is.²⁵¹ This complies with his commitment “to be as concise as possible and avoid redundancy and the proliferation of futile information”, as noted by pseudo-Iṣfahānī. Likewise, at the end of Iṣḥāq's article, al-Iṣfahānī states:

There are numerous reports about Iṣḥāq, which are of little value and replete with redundancy; therefore, I leave them out. There are other reports which should be placed in the appropriate place, so I postpone their inclusion and keep them for later. What I mention here is sufficient.²⁵²

This comment by al-Iṣfahānī illustrates his deliberate avoidance of repetition, redundancy, and discontinuity. These remarks all dovetail with the descriptions of report-selection and arrangement outlined by pseudo-Iṣfahānī.

²⁵⁰ See 2.2 below.

²⁵¹ Kilpatrick, *Making*, 89–90; al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.2, 206–207.

²⁵² Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.5, 311.

After the preface by pseudo-Iṣfahānī, the original introduction is marked by the change from the third person to the first and the explicit quotation of the words of al-Iṣfahānī: “Said the compiler of this book.”²⁵³ In this part of the preface, al-Iṣfahānī first justifies his arrangement of articles based on songs. Unlike previous books of songs, which were structured around the melodic modes (*ṭarāʾiq al-ghināʾ*), the chronological order, or the ranks of singers or poets, in al-Iṣfahānī’s blueprint for his *Aghānī*, it is arranged according to the songs. Thus, the compiler defends his unusual design:

Amongst them [reasons of compiling articles according to the songs, *ʿilāl*] is that when we decided to place Three Selected Songs (*al-thalātha al-aṣwāt al-mukhtāra* [the top three songs in the list of The Hundred Songs]) at the beginning of it [the *Aghānī*], their poets are not prominent. The first of them, Abū Qaṭīfa, is seen neither as one of the excellent poets nor as one of the prolific ones (*laysa min al-shuʿarāʾ al-maʿdūdīn wal-lā al-fuḥūl*). ʿUmar b. Abī Rabīʿa follows [after Abū Qaṭīfa] and then Nuṣayb. When the beginning of the book works this way, it is not possible to arrange the poets one by one in it [the book] in the above ways [arrangement based on the ranks of poets]. So it is with the rest of The Hundred Songs, as they [song lists] are not presented in accordance with the poets or musicians. The purpose of this book is not to set out the ranks (*tartīb al-ṭabaqāt*), but to mention the songs and their relevant reports. And this [perhaps al-Iṣfahānī means his arrangement based on songs] is not what causes damage (*wa-laysa hādhā mim mā yaḍurru fihā*). Among them [reasons] is that the melodic modes of songs are each rarely monopolized by one musician but commonly employed by different musicians. Thus, it is not possible to arrange them based on the melodic modes, as no musician is more qualified to be attached to a mode than another. Amongst them [reasons] is that — even if we disregard the aforementioned reasons — if we place the songs, reports, and the musical settings, musician by musician, we inevitably bring out everything mentioned by the compilers and transmitters, with its redundancy and with few benefits. This contradicts what we stipulate, to remove redundancy [...] That [the person-by-person arrangement] causes fatigue for the soul and boredom for the heart, and it is human nature to desire to change from one thing to

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, vl.1, 14.

another and from the known to the new [...] ²⁵⁴

For al-Iṣfahānī, an arrangement based on chronology, the ranks, or the melodic modes inevitably brings the repetition and lengthiness, which, in return, burdens his readers. This approach, again, corresponds with the editorial remarks made by pseudo-Iṣfahānī: “[...] the passages which, when the reader reflects on them, carry the reader continuously from one benefit to another and moves him between earnest and jest [...]” That is, digression and vicissitude — common strategies in medieval Arabic compilation ²⁵⁵ — can refresh the minds of readers.

Finally, al-Iṣfahānī explains the reason behind his compilation: “[...] one of the chief men (*raʾīs min ruʾasāʾinā*) commissioned me to collect this work for him. He informed me that he had heard that the book — which is worthless — attributed to Iṣḥāq is not his work and that he doubted its attribution, since most of Iṣḥāq’s companions reject it, among them his son, Ḥammād. By my life, he is honest in what he mentions and correct in what he denies.” ²⁵⁶ This *raʾīs*, as we have discussed, is most likely to be al-Muhallabī. ²⁵⁷ Al-Iṣfahānī then cites two accounts, respectively on the authorities of Ḥammād, the son of Iṣḥāq al-Mawṣilī, and Jaḥẓa, that demonstrate the fabrication of the book in question. Then, al-Iṣfahānī finalises the preface with an invocation for God’s protection from what angers Him, seeking His forgiveness. ²⁵⁸

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, vl.1, 15.

²⁵⁵ See further: Geert J. H. van Gelder, “Mixtures of Jest and Earnest in Classical Arabic Literature Part I,” *Journal of Arabic Literature*, 23-2 (1992): 83–108; *idem*, “Mixtures of Jest and Earnest in Classical Arabic Literature Part II,” *Journal of Arabic Literature*, 23-3 (1992): 169–190.

²⁵⁶ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.1, 16.

²⁵⁷ Page 70.

²⁵⁸ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.1, 16.

In short, the preface to the *Aghānī* informs us of al-Iṣfahānī's blueprint for this work, in spite of the additions by pseudo-Iṣfahānī. It is clear from pseudo-Iṣfahānī's descriptions and al-Iṣfahānī's own comments that certain principles have been applied in al-Iṣfahānī's arrangement and selection of material. These are the combination of jesting and serious topics, the avoidance of redundancy, and the selection of the valuable (however this is defined) reports. From the preface, we know that the *Aghānī* is divided into three parts. We now move to the overview of the structure and contents of each part.

2.2. Tripartite Structure of the *Aghānī*

According to the preface, the *Aghānī* is divided into three parts: first, The Hundred Songs (*al-mi'a al-ṣawt al-mukhtāra*) and other song collections; second, the songs of the caliphs and of their children and grandchildren (*aghānī al-khulafā' wa-awlādihim wa-awlād awlādihim*); third, al-Iṣfahānī's selection of songs. The articles in each part are arranged based on different patterns, but it is mostly the song which introduces the articles on biographies or events.²⁵⁹

The first part — consisting of The Hundred Songs and other collections of songs — begins with the article on Abū Qaṭīfa and ends with the Seven Songs of Ibn Surayj.²⁶⁰ It is structured around The Hundred Songs, a list of exquisite songs revised by Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī on the order of al-Wāthiq.²⁶¹ The normative pattern of

²⁵⁹ This section mainly outlines the observations by Kilpatrick, who, in her book, thoroughly discusses the arrangement of articles, their order and their irregularities. Apart from some examples that are used by this thesis as supplements, the key points in this section are derived from her: Kilpatrick, *Making*, 259–267.

²⁶⁰ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Aghānī*, vl.1, 22–vl.8, 199.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, vl.1, 16–21.

structure in this part is Song-Poet-Musician. A song is placed at the beginning of each section. It then introduces the articles on its poet and its composer.²⁶² For instance, the very first song of the *Aghānī* is presented as follows:

Al-qaṣru fa-l-nakhlū fa-l-jammā'u baynahumā ashhā ilā al-qalbi min abwābi Jayrūnī
[...]

Its metre is *Basīṭ* the first [...] The poem is by Abū Qatīfa al-Mu'ayyī, the musical setting by Ma'bad. It has two melodic modes: one is *khafīf thaqīl awwal bi-l-wuṣṭā fī majrāhā*, according to the narration of Ishāq, which is the setting of the selected song [the song on the list of The Hundred Songs]; the other is *thaqīl awwal bi-l-wuṣṭā* in Ishāq's system (*madhhab*), according to the narration of 'Amr b. Bāna.²⁶³

After the preface, the above verses (*al-qaṣru...*) are presented with musical indications. The song first introduces the article about its lyricist, or poet, Abū Qatīfa, and subsequently that about Ma'bad, the composer of the music. The Song-Poet-Musician pattern has variants and exceptions but the organisational schema in the first part fundamentally conforms to this pattern.²⁶⁴

The second part of the *Aghānī* centers on the members of the Umayyad and Abbasid families who were known as musicians or to have composed refined songs. It begins with an introduction and ends with the article about 'Abdallāh b. al-Mu'tazz.²⁶⁵ The organisational pattern here differs from that of the first part. Instead of introducing articles with songs, al-Iṣfahānī names the royal musicians in chronological order, quotes their songs, and then compiles articles on lyricist-poets related to their

²⁶² Kilpatrick, *Making*, 259–262.

²⁶³ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.1, 13–14.

²⁶⁴ Kilpatrick, *Making*, 259–262.

²⁶⁵ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.9, 209–vl.10, 228.

songs.²⁶⁶ For instance, this part begins with ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (r. 99–101/717–20), reports concerning him, and his musical works. ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz’s song then introduces the article on the poet, Ashhab b. Rumayla, the poet behind the lyrics of ‘Umar’s song. After this, al-Iṣfahānī proceeds to the next caliph known for composing songs, al-Walīd b. Yazīd (r. 125–126/743–744).²⁶⁷

The third part, possibly framed by al-Iṣfahānī’s selection of songs,²⁶⁸ is obscure in that, unlike the first and second parts, it is not preceded by a preface and that its organisational pattern is less regular. However, it is separated by a transition in era and in the subjects of the articles, beginning with Zuhayr b. Abī Sulmā and followed by a number of pre-Islamic poets, who are apparently not members of caliphal houses.²⁶⁹ The organisational pattern of articles in the third part of the *Aghānī* is similar to its counterpart in the first part, *viz.*, songs serving as the introductory tool for articles. However, there are many exceptions. It is often the case that only one article follows the introductory song, because many of the major composers and poets have already been addressed.²⁷⁰ It happens that the musicians whose names appear for the first time are not treated immediately, such as ‘Arīb, whose article appears only after reference has been made to four songs authored by her. Moreover, a number of poets and musicians behind songs are mentioned as the poets and composers of songs without being given any treatment.²⁷¹

²⁶⁶ Kilpatrick, *Making*, 263.

²⁶⁷ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.9, 212–228.

²⁶⁸ Kilpatrick, *Making*, 259. However, except for the notes by pseudo-Iṣfahānī, it is not entirely clear what criteria determine al-Iṣfahānī’s selection in this part.

²⁶⁹ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.10, 238–vl.11, 39.

²⁷⁰ Kilpatrick, *Making*, 263–264.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 263–267.

The explanations for these irregularities — the articles appearing without adherence to the normative patterns — remain conjectural. It is possible that some of these erratic arrangements were caused by al-Iṣfahānī, who perhaps deliberately works against the normative pattern for a reason he never mentions. Nonetheless, there are other possibilities.

First, the *Aghānī* may never have been fully completed, as Kilpatrick suggests.²⁷² This is especially true in the second and third parts, where irregularities are frequently found.²⁷³ What further buttresses this view is the preface of the second part: “The authors of some of them [the songs] are unknown to me, so I present the reports as transmitted to me. If it [further information] is passed to me sometime hereafter, I will then mention that in its place (*ba‘duhā lam a‘rif qā’ilahu fa-ataytu bihi kamā waqa‘a ilayya. In marra bī ba‘da waqtī hādhā athbattuhu fī mawḍa‘ihī*).”²⁷⁴ This implies that al-Iṣfahānī expected further revision or alteration of his work, at least in the second part, in the course of compiling. As the *Aghānī* is not finished, it is possible that al-Iṣfahānī did not have the opportunity to fix some of its irregular arrangements before his demise.

Secondly, the extant manuscripts of the *Aghānī* are only available in part. The twenty-four volumes of the printed edition are the result of the collation of a number of manuscripts that differ in length, date, and coverage.²⁷⁵ In consequence, the original order of the *Aghānī* is hard to recover, since it is impossible to tell whether

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 30.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 263–267.

²⁷⁴ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.9, 209.

²⁷⁵ Kilpatrick, *Making*, 31–32.

the disturbance, in order and regularity, of the organisational patterns is due to the copyists or to al-Iṣfahānī. Since there is no manuscript covering the whole work and all the manuscripts differ in one way or another, the extent to which the order of articles of which we know is close to the compiler's original plan remains an open question.

Although the articles in each part are put together in different ways, they do share a number of characteristics. Each article, if it is addressing the biography of a poet or musician, starts with al-Iṣfahānī's summary of the subject, which usually includes some of the following information: his or her name, tribal or familial affiliation or both, profession, place of residence, political engagement, religious confession, individual character traits, position in the literary community, interaction with his or her contemporaries, and artistic achievements.²⁷⁶ After the profile of the subject, a number of reports varying in length follows and forms the main body of the article. Depending on the reports available to al-Iṣfahānī and how he assesses their relevance, the length of each article can differ markedly. For example, the articles about 'Umar b. Abī Rabī'a and Iṣḥāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī are more than a hundred pages in length, while others, such as the articles about 'Umar al-Wādī and Abū Kāmil, occupy less than ten pages each.²⁷⁷ Each report consists of two parts: the *isnād* (chain of transmission) and the *matn* (text, the content of the report). After the reports, which provide different perspectives on the subject, an article usually, but not always, ends with reports about the subject's demise. In other words, although each part's overall structure differs, the internal structure of each article has certain

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 73. For articles on events, songs, and other themes, see Kilpatrick's discussion at 128–180.

²⁷⁷ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.1, 63–193 (on 'Umar b. Abī Rabī'a); vl.5, 190–315 (Iṣḥāq al-Mawṣilī); vl.7, 69–73 ('Umar al-Wādī), 74–77 (Abū Kāmil).

features in common.

To recapitulate what we have covered in Section One (2.1) and Section Two (2.2), the preface of the *Aghānī* was not entirely penned by al-Iṣfahānī. Notwithstanding its usefulness as an outline of al-Iṣfahānī's approach, the clear stylistic transition suggests interpolation and omission. Neither is the order of the articles of the *Aghānī* free from problems. As the articles of the *Aghānī* are connected to one another based on certain patterns — following either the introductory songs, as in the first and third parts, or chronological order, as in the second — the irregularities thus indicate either incompleteness, or disruption to the order of the *Aghānī*, or both. The possibility of interpolation, and problems of incompleteness and potential disruption to the order, should also be considered in light of the manuscript situation. As we do not possess a manuscript that covers the whole *Aghānī* or dates back to the tenth century, we must ask to what extent the *Aghānī*, as we have it, retains the original form and structure, as designed by al-Iṣfahānī. In the following section, we will continue to discuss the textual problems in the *Aghānī* and then address the question of whether the *Aghānī* is close enough to its original form to reflect its compiler's agenda.

2.3. Textual Problems, the *Aghānī* as a *Syngrammat* and its Manuscripts

Like any pre-modern written material, the *Aghānī* is not immune to textual problems such as lacunae, textual obscurities, scribal errors, and apparent incompleteness of articles.²⁷⁸ The textual problems in the *Aghānī* were noticed as early as the thirteenth century by Yāqūt (574–626/1178–1229), when he found that al-Iṣfahānī sometimes

²⁷⁸ Kilpatrick, *Making*, 31–32.

promises to mention something but never, in fact, does so — for example, an article about Abū Nuwās. Another issue noted by Yāqūt is that The Hundred Songs — the first part of the *Aghānī* — are only ninety-nine songs, according to his calculation.²⁷⁹ However, the printed edition includes 103 songs in The Hundred Songs, a result of al-Iṣfahānī reconstructing The Hundred Songs based on two lists of songs, on the authorities of Jaḥẓa and ‘Alī b. Yaḥyā al-Munajjim.²⁸⁰ Yāqūt may have erred in his calculation of the number of the songs, but the article about Abū Nuwās is indeed missing in the printed edition. In other words, this flaw in the *Aghānī* was already present within three hundred years of its compiler’s death.

Another textual problem concerns the articles’ order. In addition to the irregular arrangement of the articles that do not follow the normative patterns, which we have mentioned in section two (2.2), the mismatch of internal references also implies disruption to the original order. Throughout the whole work, al-Iṣfahānī refers to materials placed elsewhere via phrases in the past or future tense, such as *sa-ya’tī* (it will come), *sa-adhkuru* (I will mention), *qad sabaqa* (it appeared before), or *qad dhukira* (it has been mentioned). The materials to which he refers do not always appear according to these references. Sometimes the reports to which he alludes in the past tense appear afterwards and *vice versa*.²⁸¹ That is to say, some of the articles are not placed as al-Iṣfahānī determined. Thus, except for the first three songs of The Hundred Songs, which are to be found in the beginning of the *Aghānī*, according to the preface,²⁸² and the second part, which is based on chronological order, the articles

²⁷⁹ Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, vl.13, 98–99.

²⁸⁰ Kilpatrick, *Making*, 261; Sallūm, *Dirāsāt*, 18–19.

²⁸¹ Kilpatrick, *Making*, 261; Sallūm, *Dirāsāt*, 19–25.

²⁸² Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.1, 15.

may have been relocated by copyists and whoever was involved in the making of manuscripts.

All these textual flaws — the interpolation in the preface, the absence of some articles, and the disruption of the original order — can be accounted for on the basis of the *Aghānī*'s unfinished status and the problematic nature of its manuscripts. However, this also raises a further question: how do we know that the *Aghānī* we have is the text compiled by al-Iṣfahānī? Could it be a recension by some of his students or even one re-shaped by an unknown *warrāq*, as in the case of Iṣḥāq's *Kitāb al-Aghānī*? In other words, can we establish that the *Aghānī* is a real published book (*syngrammat*) authored by al-Iṣfahānī, with significant textual stability, and thus capable of reflecting al-Iṣfahānī's agenda and the wider discourse in which he was engaged? To address this question, we must consider the manuscripts, both those used in the printed edition and those not used.²⁸³

The question of how many articles of the *Aghānī* are missing is ultimately unanswerable. As mentioned previously, it is possible that al-Iṣfahānī was not able to finish his compilation. Thus, the article about Abū Nuwās may have never been penned by al-Iṣfahānī. Without his internal references, we would not know that something has been lost, as the manuscript record is not sufficiently complete to suggest as much. Nonetheless, we can assess more fully the impact of the other two problems on the textual stability of the *Aghānī*.

²⁸³ The manuscripts consulted while writing this thesis include: Fe1561-1569 of the Faydallāh Collection held in Millet Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi in Istanbul; At2000–At2002 of Atıf Efendi Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi, currently held in Süleymaniye Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi; Nur3657, Nur3659, Nur3660, and Nur3661, also in Süleymaniye Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi; Or2075–2078 from British Library. See Appendix Two.

The interpolation by pseudo-Iṣfahānī should not be seen as an early phenomenon, as it only dates back to the sixteenth century. The manuscripts that cover the first volume and are used to produce the printed edition of Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya are relatively late: the earliest is Mss. Taymūriyya, copied in 937/1530–31.²⁸⁴ As the preface by pseudo-Iṣfahānī appears only in some of the later manuscripts,²⁸⁵ it is important not to overstate what it implies, that is, that the text of the *Aghānī* may have undergone some dramatic alteration.²⁸⁶

A similar conclusion may be reached when considering the disruption of the order. Despite the misplacement of the articles, it is likely that the *Aghānī* retains its basic structure and content. The references leading nowhere represent only a small proportion, while most of the references are precise in how they indicate material.²⁸⁷ Furthermore, these internal references indicate the connection between the division of the *Aghānī* into volumes and its internal coherence. For instance, there are references in the first volume to material in the sixth, fifteenth, eighteenth, and twentieth volumes.²⁸⁸ The later volumes might not accord with the original order designed by al-Iṣfahānī, but this shows that these later volumes, wherever they may have been originally placed, were in al-Iṣfahānī's mind as part of his *Aghānī*.

²⁸⁴ The *taṣdīr* in *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, by al-Iṣfahānī, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, 1952), 42–53.

²⁸⁵ The manuscripts not consulted by Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya's edition covering the first volume are: At2001 produced in 1267–68/1850–51, Nur3657 in 1140/1727–28, Nur3659 in 1156/1743–44 and Nur3661 without specifying date; all have the same interpolated preface.

²⁸⁶ The earliest manuscript covering the first volume, which I am not able to consult, is held in Alexandria, Baladiyya. This manuscript may provide new insights into the issue of the preface to the *Aghānī*. See: Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des Arabischen Schrifttums* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1967), vl.1, 381–382.

²⁸⁷ Kilpatrick, *Making*, 123.

²⁸⁸ Sallūm, *Dirasāt*, 26–29.

Moreover, it is worth noting that the considerable differences in order are only found in some manuscripts, such as Fe1562 (526/1132–33), Fe1564 (526/1132–33), Fe1565 (657/1259–60), Fe1566 (657/1259–60), Fe1567 (no date is given) and Fe1568 (628/1231–32).²⁸⁹ Although these Fe manuscripts are relatively early, such a phenomenon should not be overrated, as some other early manuscripts such as Or2075–2078, held by the Fāṭimid caliph, al-Zāfir (r. 544–549/1149–1154), largely conform to the order of the printed edition.

In addition, the internal structure and order within each article retain some stability. A comparison between the printed edition and the manuscripts that I have consulted shows that the internal structure of each article, as well as its contents, mostly matches the printed edition.²⁹⁰ Although there are divergences in terms of wording and phrasing, it is very rare for omission and misplacement of reports within an article to take place. An example I came across is in the article of Nuṣayb in Or2075: a report is delayed by a few pages. This to some extent indicates that textual uniformity and stability are shared by manuscripts produced in different places and times.

A number of factors also suggest that the *Aghānī* is a *syngrammat* authored by al-Iṣfahānī, as opposed to *hypomnēmata* (lecture notes). This view is corroborated by Schoeler in his survey of the development of the publication and transmission of texts in different disciplines up until the tenth century.²⁹¹ First, during the tenth

²⁸⁹ See the descriptions of manuscripts in Appendix Two.

²⁹⁰ See Appendices Two and Three.

²⁹¹ Gregor Schoeler, *The Genesis of Literature in Islam: From the Aural to the Read*, trans. Shawkat M. Toorawa (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 113–114.

century the former, the *syngrammat*, became more and more prevalent and acceptable, especially in the *adab* genre.²⁹² Al-Iṣfahānī's *Maqātil al-Ṭālibīyīn* is clearly a *syngrammat* and perhaps the *Aghānī* should not be regarded as an exception.²⁹³ Secondly, the *Aghānī* displays certain characteristics of a *syngrammat*, such as the inclusion of a preface and an epilogue, specification of the dedicatee, and the use of a sophisticated system of internal references and cross-references to other works.²⁹⁴ As mentioned above, the *Aghānī* has two prefaces, one at the beginning and the other between the first and second parts. The *Aghānī* does not lack internal references, either. As for the external references, it is also known that al-Iṣfahānī refers to his other works, such as *Risāla fī 'ilal al-nagham* and *Mujarrad al-aghānī*, in the *Aghānī*.²⁹⁵ Finally, al-Iṣfahānī was known as the author of the *Aghānī* by his contemporary, al-Tanūkhī.²⁹⁶ Although textual problems exist, they should not detract too much from the plausibility of the *Aghānī* mostly retaining its form and structure, as they originated with al-Iṣfahānī. Although the earliest manuscripts (i.e., Fe1561–Fe1564 and Or.2075–Or.2078) consulted during this research only date back to the twelfth century, the consistency in the internal structure and the textual stability within a given single article, as shown in these manuscripts, suggest that little serious modification was inflicted on it in the centuries before the date of the first extant manuscript. Yet, it must be kept in mind that the order in some early manuscripts (e.g. the Fe Mss.) is different.

²⁹² Christopher Melchert, *Ahmad ibn Hanbal* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006), 24–33; Michael Cook, “The Opponents of the Writing of Tradition in Early Islam,” *Voix et Calame en Islam Médiéval*, 44-4 (1997): 437–530.

²⁹³ Günther, “Maqātil,” 197–207.

²⁹⁴ Sebastian Günther, “Assessing the Sources of Classical Arabic Compilations,” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 32-1(2005): 79.

²⁹⁵ ‘Āṣī, *Abū al-Faraj*, 78–81; al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.22, 7.

²⁹⁶ Al-Tanūkhī, *al-Faraj*, vl.1, 331; vl.5, 43.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the preface to the *Aghānī*, which, although not entirely written by al-Iṣfahānī, sets out his organisational plan and the work's tripartite structure. It has also discussed how the articles are put together in each part of the work. We have then pointed out textual problems in the *Aghānī* and explained their possible causes. Despite the difficulty in recovering the original preface and the order of the articles, it can be established that the order of reports within each article does not differ significantly, based on a comparison with the early manuscripts that are not used in the printed edition. Although the earliest manuscripts of the *Aghānī* consulted during this research can be traced back only as far as the twelfth century (as is usual for early Arabic texts), it does seem plausible that we have a text that is quite close to what al-Iṣfahānī compiled.

This point — that the *Aghānī* was authored by al-Iṣfahānī, rather than being a recension by his student(s) — is important, as this thesis presumes that the structure of each article, its selection, and its repetitive elements have been meaningfully produced by the compiler and, thus, can mirror his agenda. This presumption can be valid only when al-Iṣfahānī is probably responsible for what we see in the *Aghānī*.

Since the components of each article display some degree of uniformity across the different manuscripts and since the *Aghānī* as we know it indeed seems to be — in Schoeler's terminology — a *syngrammat* by al-Iṣfahānī, textual analysis of the *akhbār* has potential to reflect how al-Iṣfahānī may have re-shaped the material at his

hand to articulate his agendas.²⁹⁷ Thus, we can carry on with our search for al-Iṣfahānī's sectarian agenda in his *Aghānī* in the following chapters.

²⁹⁷ See the textual comparison between the printed text and the manuscripts in Appendix Three.

Chapter Three: al-Iṣfahānī's Selection of His Material and the Transmission of the Text

One way to investigate al-Iṣfahānī's selection of his material and its implications is to find all the reports on a given subject in existing compilations, including later compilations containing narrations which can be traced back to earlier sources. That is, if there exist two different versions of a story, but only one of them is used by al-Iṣfahānī, then it is possible to suggest that he has made a meaningful selection. However, how do we know when such a selection is deliberate on al-Iṣfahānī's part? As al-Iṣfahānī consistently gives detailed *isnāds* for the reports that he cites, it is possible to reconstruct a repository of his sources – both Fleischhammer's *Die Quellen des Kitāb al-Aḡānī* and Günther's survey on the *Maqātil* benefit from al-Iṣfahānī's meticulous use of *isnāds* to shed light on the reports' transmission and dissemination. In agreement with these source studies, this research presumes the validity of the *isnāds* given by al-Iṣfahānī. Given the scepticism amongst Western scholars towards the chains of transmission, this presumption needs to be justified before we can move on to our reconstruction of al-Iṣfahānī's pool of information.²⁹⁸

Unlike the *isnāds* in *ḥadīth* work, a chain of transmission in an *adab* compilation does not, and is not expected, to secure the authenticity and authority of given reports. Rather, "it is conceived of as a contribution to the establishment of an ideal in the realm of values, knowledge, or behaviour, especially thought and verbal expression, and it may also reflect a desire to entertain."²⁹⁹ Thus, a full *isnād* tracing

²⁹⁸ Günther, "Assessing," 79 and footnote 14.

²⁹⁹ Kilpatrick, "The 'genuine' Ash'ab. The Relativity of Fact and Fiction in Early *adab* Text," in *Story-Telling of non-Fictional Arabic Literature*, ed. Stefan Leder (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998), 95.

back to the eyewitness of the given account can be found in an *adab* work and in historiography, but it is not unusual to find a truncated *isnād* or even a report without any *isnād*.³⁰⁰ However, although the “*isnād* could be understood as a general discursive cloth to textual presentation which responds to a fundamental conception of authenticity,” it does not guarantee any historical reliability.³⁰¹ That said, it is very unlikely that al-Iṣfahānī invented *isnāds* and attached them to reports. Al-Iṣfahānī exceptionally identifies his sources with chains of transmission in a thorough manner. This practice was less prevalent among *adab*-type compilations,³⁰² because, unlike the *ḥadīth*, which notionally originated from the Prophet or his Companions, *adab*-compilers were not obliged to secure such a sacred lineage. Al-Iṣfahānī’s unusual practice might have exposed him to severe censure, should he have fabricated or falsely attributed a report. Furthermore, both the *Kitāb al-Aghānī* and *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn* show al-Iṣfahānī’s efforts to record *isnāds* and clarify sources in detail — how he acquires each narration (from written sources or from oral transmission) and which one he presents when combining multiple sources together.³⁰³ It is not unusual to see al-Iṣfahānī cite a number of *isnāds* and specify which narration (*lafẓ*) he is following.³⁰⁴ His rigorous indication of his sources would be surprising, if he was making up reports and *isnāds*. Finally, a textual comparison between the report al-Iṣfahānī quotes and the original text from which al-Iṣfahānī claims to have acquired the account shows that al-Iṣfahānī was indeed using the

³⁰⁰ Kilpatrick, *Making*, 94–99.

³⁰¹ Leder, “Features,” 74; *idem*, “The literary use of khabar: A basic form of historical writing” in *Late Antiquity And Early Islam*, ed. Lawrence L. Conrad and Averil Cameron (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1992), 277–315.

³⁰² Günther, *Quellenuntersuchungen*, 100.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, 100–109; Kilpatrick, *Making*, 94–104.

³⁰⁴ Sallūm, *Dirāsāt*, 56–69; Jabrī, *Dirāsāt*, 44–47.

sources he mentions in the *isnāds*.³⁰⁵

Here, I do not claim that all al-Iṣfahānī's reports trace back to the so-called "first guarantor (*erster Gewährsmann*)," still less that whatsoever is recorded in the *Aghānī* reflects the historical truth.³⁰⁶ Rather, I simply suggest that al-Iṣfahānī's direct informants (be they written material or a *shaykh* with whom al-Iṣfahānī had personal contact) and, in some cases, the sources of his direct informants, as stated in the *isnāds*, are traceable and can thus be used to estimate what may have been available to al-Iṣfahānī. For example, al-Iṣfahānī cites al-Ṭabarī as his direct informant and a textual comparison between al-Iṣfahānī's citations and the original text by al-Ṭabarī reveals nearly verbatim correspondence between the two texts. Hence, al-Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh*, or, at least, part of it, can be considered when we reconstruct the repository of reports at al-Iṣfahānī's disposal. In order to evaluate whether a text can be used to reconstruct the pool of reports available to al-Iṣfahānī, we are obliged to examine al-Iṣfahānī's *isnāds*, compare his citations with the original sources, and address problems inherent in the aural and oral transmission. These issues will be addressed in this chapter, on the assumption that al-Iṣfahānī's *isnāds* truly indicate those from whom he obtains pieces of information.

When we reconstruct a repository of reports about a given subject, we encounter the following kinds:

A. reports with *isnāds* overlapping with those in the *Aghānī*

³⁰⁵ See Appendix Four and 3.1.

³⁰⁶ The "First Guarantor is the earliest or most senior person in an *isnād*, regardless of whether or not it is complete": Günther, "Assessing," 86.

B. reports with *isnāds* not found in the *Aghānī* or reports without *isnāds*

In some of the compilations prior to the *Aghānī*, the use of the chain of transmission is not always consistent, particularly in the non-*ḥadīth* disciplines. Their compilers might omit the *isnād*, use a truncated *isnād* (drop a few informants), or combine several narrations without stating the source of each individually. This leads to the existence of Category B. In this case, it is difficult to say whether the reports concerned were available to al-Ḥafḥānī, as it is not known whether they share common sources with him. In contrast, Category A has the potential to reflect what is used by al-Ḥafḥānī.

Nevertheless, the reports in Category A are not free from problems. The co-existence of aural and written transmission inevitably reduces our confidence when we determine which report was excluded by al-Ḥafḥānī from his work. On the other hand, Category B does have the potential to be useful. Even if the *isnāds* in Category B do not appear in al-Ḥafḥānī's works, this does not mean that they were unknown to him, when we consider the rise of what Toorawa terms "writely culture" in the ninth century and the thriving industry of the production of books after the introduction of paper to the *Dār al-Islām* by mid-eighth century.³⁰⁷ Furthermore, Category B might reveal the discourse with which al-Ḥafḥānī was engaged and what the version presented in the *Aghānī* might have implied in its own context.

³⁰⁷ Schoeler, *The Genesis*, 99–110; Shawkat M. Toorawa, *Ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr and Arabic Writerly Culture: A Ninth-century Bookman in Baghdad* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2005), 1; Jonathan M. Bloom, *Paper Before Print: The History and Impact of Paper in the Islamic World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 42–45.

First, the following section (3.1) will address Category A as an indicator of what al-Iṣfahānī has selected; despite being probabilistic, a survey of the textual transmission of a number of the sources concludes that the narrations of al-Zubayr b. Bakkār, those of ‘Umar b. Shabba, part of al-Ṭabarī’s *Tārīkh*, a small part of Ibn Sa‘d’s *Ṭabaqāt*, and Ibn Qutayba’s *al-Shi‘r*, in all likelihood, were available to al-Iṣfahānī. Section two (3.2) elucidates Category B’s utility with regards to the transmission and dissemination of knowledge in tenth-century Baghdad, especially in *sūq al-warrāqīn*.

3.1. Category A and the Problem of the Transmission

If an informant in an *isnād* of a report is found in the *Aghānī* as a source for al-Iṣfahānī, then it is possible that this report and other reports narrated by the given informant were available to al-Iṣfahānī. Nonetheless, this judgment might oversimplify the complex problem of transmission. Until the ninth and the tenth centuries, “author and transmitters are often indistinguishable”, as “transmitters were very much involved in shaping a text. They supplemented the material, shortened or reworked it, and so on”.³⁰⁸ The following example will clarify the cruces inherent in our attempt to investigate the process of the selection as it resulted from the transmission and dissemination of knowledge in the mediaeval Islamic world.

Let us assume that there are two reports about a subject, narrated on the authority of al-Zubayr b. Bakkār (172–256/788–870). The first report presents the subject in a positive light, the second in a negative light. Only the positive report, with its *isnād* naming al-Zubayr b. Bakkār as the source, is mentioned in the *Aghānī*. Does this,

³⁰⁸ Gregor Schoeler, *The Oral and the Written in Early Islam*, trans. Uwe Vagelpohl, ed. James E. Montgomery (London: Routledge, 2006), 39.

then, imply that al-Iṣfahānī intentionally overlooks the second report? Here, we must first ask: to what extent were the narrations of al-Zubayr b. Bakkār available to al-Iṣfahānī? Secondly, given the blurred line between real author and mere transmitter, it is also worth considering how we can ascertain that such a presentation in the *Aghānī* was a result of al-Iṣfahānī's intervention, rather than determined by his intermediate informants. In the case of al-Zubayr b. Bakkār, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ḥaramī (d. 317/929) and Aḥmad b. Sulaymān al-Ṭūsī's (240–322/858–934) recensions of al-Zubayr b. Bakkār's works are both used in the *Aghānī*.³⁰⁹ Might one of them be responsible for the selection? The answers to these questions must remain speculative, but we may pursue the plausibility of the premise that al-Iṣfahānī himself leaves out certain reports.

For the first question, we can consider the quantity and type of al-Zubayr b. Bakkār's reports used by al-Iṣfahānī. As al-Zubayr b. Bakkār is quoted extensively by al-Iṣfahānī, it is likely that the negative report indeed lay at al-Iṣfahānī's disposal.³¹⁰ As for types, al-Zubayr b. Bakkār is the source of information about musicians, poets, and genealogy, but most of the subjects transmitted on his authority in the *Aghānī* belong to the pre-ʿAbbasid period.³¹¹ That is, al-Iṣfahānī might not have had access to al-Zubayr b. Bakkār's narrations regarding the later period. Hence, if the subject of the above example is an ʿAbbasid, then the possibility that al-Iṣfahānī had received both reports is reduced.

On the second question, of whether an omission might have been made by al-

³⁰⁹ Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 37, 45–46, 107–108.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*; al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, indices.

³¹¹ Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 107–109.

Iṣfahānī or by one or more intermediary transmitters, we may use Sezgin's method, which distinguishes *collectors/compilers* from mere *transmitters*.³¹² This question, although unlikely to be answerable with confidence, could be disentangled by the following enquiries. First of all, we can investigate the roles of al-Ḥaramī and al-Ṭūsī, as to whether they are known to have authored any relevant work. If there is no indication of their authorship of any *mu'allaf* or *musannaf*, then it may be presumed that they were probably no more than transmitters.³¹³ Here, it seems that both al-Ṭūsī and al-Ḥaramī did not compile any relevant work, but were simply known as al-Zubayr b. Bakkār's transmitters.³¹⁴

According to al-Khaṭīb, al-Zubayr b. Bakkār gave his *Kitāb al-Nasab* to the father of al-Ṭūsī as a gift and had him read in front of him while his son was present.³¹⁵ This book may be identified with *Jamharat nasab Quraysh wa-akhbārūhā*, one of al-Zubayr b. Bakkār's extant works. This work, despite its structure based on *nasab* (genealogy), contains so many reports that al-Zubayr b. Bakkār's contemporary, Iṣḥāq al-Mawṣilī, deemed it a *kitāb al-akhbār* (book of reports) rather than a *kitāb al-nasab* (book of genealogy).³¹⁶ We do not have the whole *Jamharat nasab Quraysh*, as its extant manuscripts, respectively held in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, and Astana, Kazakhstan, are incomplete. The name, al-Ṭūsī — present in the chains of the transmitters in both manuscripts — attests to the fact that he finished studying the work with al-Zubayr b. Bakkār and possibly possessed it.³¹⁷ Since al-Zubayr b.

³¹² Schoeler, *The Oral*, 36.

³¹³ Sezgin, *Geschichte*, vl.1, 241–242.

³¹⁴ Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 37–38, 45–46.

³¹⁵ Al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, vl.5, 289.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, vl.9, 489.

³¹⁷ For the manuscripts, see: 'Abbās H. al-Jarākh, Introduction to *Jamharat nasab Quraysh wa-akhbārūhā*, by al-Zubayr b. Bakkār, ed. 'Abbās H. al-Jarākh (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2010),

Bakkār had given his *Jamharat* a definite form — a genealogically structured *akhbār* compilation known to us as well as to Ishāq — it may be established that al-Ṭūsī was merely a transmitter.

In addition, al-Qifṭī, having seen a copy of *al-Muwaḥḥaqiyyāt* in the hand of al-Ḥaramī, praises its accuracy highly (*‘alā nihāyat al-ṣiḥḥa*).³¹⁸ Of course, by “accuracy”, al-Qifṭī could be understood as meaning void of any scribal error. Yet, it may also suggest that al-Ḥaramī’s copy corresponds to the original text, several recensions of al-Zubayr b. Bakkār’s work having been compared by al-Qifṭī. In any case, we have some evidence showing that al-Zubayr b. Bakkār had given his work a fixed form and disseminated it in writing.

This question can also be addressed by observing the chains of transmission in the *Aghānī*. In the case of al-Zubayr b. Bakkār, al-Iṣfahānī frequently quotes him via al-Ḥaramī and al-Ṭūsī together as intermediaries for al-Zubayr b. Bakkār’s *riwāya*: “The observation of more than 600 places where he [al-Zubayr b. Bakkār] appears as the informant shows clearly that he [al-Iṣfahānī] has used at least two recensions, those of al-Ṭūsī and al-Ḥaramī, which he frequently quotes in parallel.”³¹⁹ This implies the fixed state of al-Zubayr b. Bakkār’s works, because the two recensions remain similar in transmission. Thus, it is likely that both al-Ḥaramī and al-Ṭūsī were simply relaying the reports of al-Zubayr b. Bakkār.

31–35. Al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, vl.9, 492 and vl.5, 289.

³¹⁸ Al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh*, vl.1, 373.

³¹⁹ Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 107–108: “Die Betrachtung der weit über 600 Stellen, an denen er als Gewährsmann von InffAF erscheint, zeigt deutlich, dass dieser seine Werke mindestens in zwei Rezensionen, der al-Ṭūsī’s und der al-Ḥaramī’s, benutzt hat, die er häufig parallel zitiert”.

In summary, the narrations of al-Zubayr b. Bakkār, especially those on pre-ʿAbbāsīd poets and genealogy, are likely to have been available to al-Iṣfahānī, without modification by intermediary transmitters, such as al-Ṭūsī and al-Ḥaramī. Furthermore, the work of al-Zubayr b. Bakkār — *Jamharat nasab Quraysh wa-akhbāruhā* — can be used in the investigation of al-Iṣfahānī’s selection of material.

Through a similar approach, we can evaluate some of al-Iṣfahānī’s other sources: Ibn Sa’d, al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Qutayba, and ʿUmar b. Shabba. The detailed analyses are presented in Appendix Four, while the results are summarized below.

It seems that al-Iṣfahānī had access to written and oral transmission from Ibn Sa’d’s narrations. Given the instability of the transmission of Ibn Sa’d’s *Ṭabaqāt*, the obscure intermediary transmitter, al-Khaffāf, whose editorial intervention is hard to evaluate, and the small number of al-Iṣfahānī’s citations from Ibn Sa’d — far fewer than those from al-Zubayr b. Bakkār — it cannot be established to what extent *al-Ṭabaqāt*, as it appears in the printed edition, may have been available to al-Iṣfahānī.³²⁰ Nonetheless, one part of the *Ṭabaqāt* — the section on al-Mughīra b. Shuʿba — as we have it in the printed edition, either via fairly stable oral transmission or via written material, seems to have been at al-Iṣfahānī’s disposal, given his verbatim citations.³²¹ Thus, this part of the *Ṭabaqāt* can be used to investigate al-Iṣfahānī’s selection of material.

³²⁰ For details, see Appendix Four; the transmission of Ibn Sa’d’s narrations: Osman Ghada, “Oral vs. Written Transmission: The case of Ṭabarī and Ibn Sa’d,” *Arabica* 48-1(2001): 66–80; Robinson, *Islamic*, 185.

³²¹ Page 196; Appendix Four.

Ibn Qutayba's (213–276/828–889) *al-Shi'r wa-l-shu'arā* is used by al-Iṣfahānī, through the recension of Ibrāhīm b. Ayyūb (d. 313/925). Fleischhammer argues that Ibrāhīm b. Ayyūb's recension is considerably different from the printed edition and must thus be seen as a separate version.³²² However, textual comparison between al-Iṣfahānī's citations and the original text shows that Fleischhammer's judgment is not entirely sound. It seems that almost two thirds of al-Iṣfahānī's narrations from Ibrāhīm b. Ayyūb are combined with other reports. About 21.4% of the reports which al-Iṣfahānī relates from Ibrāhīm b. Ayyūb without combining them with other narrations are different from their counterparts in *al-Shi'r*, while around 61.5% of the reports combined with other narrations are different.³²³ In other words, the textual discrepancy may have been related to al-Iṣfahānī's editorial decision, rather than to the deviance of Ibrāhīm b. Ayyūb's recension from the original text. This is not to say that Ibrāhīm's recension is identical to that of Ibn Qutayba, but Fleischhammer's evaluation should not be taken for granted.³²⁴ As for the usefulness of *al-Shi'r* for reconstructing the pool of information, it can still be useful, when considered alongside other compilations, as will be explained below.³²⁵

Al-Ṭabarī (224–5 – 310/839–923) was al-Iṣfahānī's direct informant and his *Tārīkh*, or, at least, part of it, was transmitted to al-Iṣfahānī by *qirā'a* (reading the text to one's teacher to receive the *ijāzat al-riwāya*): *ḥaddathanī bi-khabarihā Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī fī al-Maghāzī* and *qara'tu dhālika 'alā Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-*

³²² Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 73: “[al-Iṣfahānī] hat ohne es ausdrücklich zu nennen, sein *K. Aṣ-Ši'r wa-š-su'arā* in der Rezension seines Informanten Ibrāhīm b. Ayyūb benutzt. Da die betreffenden Stellen zumeist erheblich vom Text der Edition Michael Jan DE GOEJES (Leiden 1904) abweichen, muss von einer gesonderten Rezension gesprochen werden.”

³²³ See Appendix Four.

³²⁴ It should be mentioned that the manuscripts of this work differ significantly, see: Aḥmad Ṣaqr, *Naqd in al-Shi'r*, by Ibn Qutayba, 7-24.

³²⁵ See Chapters Four and Five.

Ṭabarī fī Kitāb al-Maghāzī.³²⁶ Whether or not al-Iṣfahānī possessed the written copy of al-Ṭabarī's work, textual comparison indicates that the transmission is fixed, as al-Iṣfahānī's quotations differ only insignificantly from al-Ṭabarī's text. Besides the *Maghāzī* — the accounts related to the life of the Prophet and pre-Islamic history on Ibn Ishāq's authority — al-Ṭabarī appears as al-Iṣfahānī's source for the *rida*, the conquest and the Umayyad period. That is to say, part of al-Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh*, perhaps covering *sīra* and pre-ʿAbbāsīd history, was transmitted to al-Iṣfahānī in fixed form.³²⁷

ʿUmar b. Shabba (d. 262/878) is mentioned in about 800 *isnāds* in the *Aghānī* and can be seen as one of the most important informants.³²⁸ In terms of types of reports, amongst his works, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, *Kitāb al-Nasab*, *Ṭabaqāt al-shuʿarāʾ*, and *Kitāb al-shiʿr wa-l-shuʿarāʾ* seem to be the main sources used in the *Aghānī*,³²⁹ but other works, with titles such as *Kitāb umarāʾ Kūfa*, may also have contributed to articles such as that on al-Walīd b. ʿUqba.³³⁰ It is likely that ʿUmar b. Shabba disseminated his works by means of oral transmission through lectures, rather than in book form.³³¹ Al-Iṣfahānī accesses his corpus via a number of intermediary informants, especially Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Jawharī, Ḥabīb b. Naṣr al-Muhallabī (d. 307/919), and Ismāʿīl b. Yūnus al-Shīʿī (d. 323/934).³³² Apart from al-Jawharī (d. 323/935), the other two seem to have almost been obliterated from the biographical sources. Although not much is known about al-Jawharī, it is certain that he compiled

³²⁶ Günther, *Quellenuntersuchungen*, 195–196; al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 29; *idem*, *al-Aghānī*, vl.4, 139.

³²⁷ See Appendix Four.

³²⁸ Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 105.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, 104.

³³⁰ Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 125. See page 167.

³³¹ “ʿUmar b. Shabba” in *EP* (S. Leder).

³³² Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 32–33, 44, 54, 104–105.

a book, *Kitāb al-Saqīfa* (or *Kitāb al-Saqīfa wa-Fadak*), which survives in the form of quotations in a number of works.³³³ Despite his authorship of *Kitāb al-Saqīfa*, al-Jawharī might not have altered the narrations of ‘Umar b. Shabba much, given that a few reports in the article about al-Walīd b. ‘Uqba, as related by al-Jawharī in the *Aghānī*, are similar to those in *Akhhbār al-Madīna*. Furthermore, ‘Umar b. Shabba’s transmitters — fifteen, in addition to the above three — are often quoted together in the *Aghānī*. This tends to imply the stability of the transmission of ‘Umar b. Shabba’s corpus.³³⁴ Given the high level of al-Iṣfahānī’s access to citations from ‘Umar b. Shabba’s reports, ‘Umar b. Shabba’s narrations can be used to reconstruct the repository of reports al-Iṣfahānī had to hand.

We have now discussed al-Iṣfahānī’s access to a number of sources, which can shed light on al-Iṣfahānī’s selection of material: Ibn Sa‘d’s *Ṭabaqāt*, but perhaps only the section about al-Mughīra b. Shu‘ba; al-Ṭabarī’s *Tārīkh*, or, at least, part of it; and Ibn Qutayba’s *al-Shi‘r*, regardless of the potential divergence of Ibrāhīm b. Ayyūb’s recension from the original text. These are concrete texts that can help us investigate what al-Iṣfahānī left out. On the other hand, the narrations of al-Zubayr b. Bakkār and ‘Umar b. Shabba are scattered throughout later compilations, as their extant works are few. While transmission after the tenth century became more stable and the later compilations are likely to preserve early sources, it is still possible that a narration with *isnād* claiming to have come from an early source was not, in fact, disseminated via the source in question.³³⁵ The attempt to reconstruct a pool of

³³³ Sezgin, *Geschichte*, vl.1, 322; al-Ṭūsī, *al-Fihrist*, 36; Āqā Buzurq al-Ṭīhrānī, *al-Dharī‘a ilā taṣānīf al-shī‘a*, 2nd ed. (Beirut: Dār al-Adwā’, 1983), vl.12, 206.

³³⁴ Appendix Four.

³³⁵ Meir J. Kister, “The *Sīrah* Literature” in *Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period*, ed. Alfred F.L. Beeston *et alii* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 367.

information available to al-Iṣfahānī is made on a speculative basis, due to the nature of the source material and of oral, and aural, transmission. However, it is possible to mitigate the uncertainty by including as many reports as possible. For instance, if one kind of report is found widely in other compilations, whether these are al-Iṣfahānī's sources or not, but absent from the *Aghānī*, it is likely that the omission has been made by al-Iṣfahānī. Thus, it is worth considering Category B, the reports which cannot be established as al-Iṣfahānī's sources, to which we shall now turn.

3.2. The Circulation and Exchange of Ideas: *Sūq al-warrāqīn*

While we can establish the likelihood of al-Iṣfahānī's deliberate selection in the case of Category A, as explained in the above section, the reports in Category B (reports from the sources not known to al-Iṣfahānī and reports without named sources) cannot be examined in the same way. Nevertheless, a few remarks about the development of writerly culture might illustrate the utility of these kinds of reports. The flourishing of literary activities from the ninth century onwards, as illustrated by the book markets (*sūq al-warrāqīn*) and the assemblies (*majālis*) of various kinds, offer a space for the circulation and exchange of reports, ideas, and views. Alongside the traditional way of learning (adhering to *shaykhs*), these two spaces were also gathering spots for intellectuals.

With al-Iṣfahānī's involvement in intellectual activities in these spaces, we might expect that more sources were available to him, sources which may contain the reports in Category B. Alternatively, these reports might at least form the context in which al-Iṣfahānī's selection and presentation of reports can be understood. To cite

but one example, in the article about al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī, al-Iṣfahānī rejects the claim that al-Sayyid withdrew from his Kaysānī conviction and converted to Imāmiyya.³³⁶ The opposite view was, however, advocated by al-Marzubānī (297–384/910–994): “Whoever claims that al-Sayyid insisted on his Kaysānī belief is a liar.”³³⁷ As al-Marzubānī is not al-Iṣfahānī’s informant, his reports fall into Category B. Nonetheless, both are contemporary Shī‘īs settled in Baghdad: al-Iṣfahānī was a Shī‘ī, al-Marzubānī a Mu‘tazilī Imāmī.³³⁸ With their association with the Būyid court, they may have had direct or indirect contact. The interpersonal link between them is Ibn al-Nadīm, who was familiar with al-Marzubānī’s works while knowing al-Iṣfahānī in person.³³⁹ Thus, the conflicting views on this issue lay the groundwork for literary, theological, and sectarian debates. Al-Iṣfahānī’s selection, with the implication of his stance towards al-Sayyid’s real sectarian affiliation, can be understood in this specific context. This illuminates the value of Category B. Due to the intellectual activities in the *majālis* or *sūq al-warrāqīn* thriving in Baghdad, the reports in Category B can be used to conceive of the implications of al-Iṣfahānī’s output.

The *majālis*, held by caliphs, viziers, or notables in their palaces, houses, or other venues, were attended by courtiers, boon-companions, and possibly officials, as well as a crew of musicians, servants, chamberlains (*hujjāb*), and others. The activities involved in these assemblies range from musical performance, recounting serious and frivolous tales to theological debates.³⁴⁰ Also, it is mentioned that books

³³⁶ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.7, 184–186.

³³⁷ See 6.3.1.

³³⁸ Al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, vl.4, 229.

³³⁹ Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 146–149, 158.

³⁴⁰ The popularity of frivolous genre of poetry, see: al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.23, 161–168; Sinan

dedicated to the patron or host of the assembly were read out in front of the attendees.³⁴¹ The significance of the *majālis* as magnets for scholars, literati, and men of various specialties with the prospect of reward and patronage is evident in the historical, literary, and biographical sources.³⁴² In Chapter One, we have considered al-Iṣfahānī's role as *nadīm* and references to his presence at the *majālis* are not lacking.³⁴³ In what follows, we will focus on the functions of book markets with regard to al-Iṣfahānī's intellectual life.

The introduction of paper and paper-making technologies allowed the transmission of knowledge to go beyond the limits of the person-to-person mode, in which *shuyūkh* lectured or dictated from memory — from their own works, or from their notes, collected and written during their learning — for the purpose of teaching in private (e.g. in their houses, or in the houses of students) or in public venues (e.g. mosques). The acquisition, exchange, and dissemination of information could now be pursued unilaterally — by reading books.³⁴⁴

The flourishing of book-making and its influence are best illustrated in the ubiquitousness of books. The public libraries, such as *Khizānat al-Ḥikma* and *Bayt al-Ḥikma*, funded respectively by al-Rashīd (r. 170–193/786–809) and al-Ma'mūn (r. 198–218/813–833), and the private ones, owned by scribes and courtiers such as 'Alī

Antoon, *The Poetics of the Obscene in Premodern Arabic Poetry: Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and sukhf* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), 6–9. The theological debates is best known with al-Ma'mūn; to cite but one example: Ibn Qutayba, *Kitāb 'Uyūn al-akhbār* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, 1996), vl.2, 154–155.

³⁴¹ For instance: Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, vl.5, 93–95.

³⁴² Anwar G. Chejne, "The Boon-Companion in Early 'Abbāsīd Times" in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 85-3(1965): 328 and footnote 1.

³⁴³ For instance, Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, vl.13, 101–104; see 1.1.2.

³⁴⁴ Toorawa, *Ibn Abī Ṭāhir*, 9.

b. Yaḥyā al-Munajjim, Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-Ṣūlī, and al-Faṭḥ b. Khāqān, impressed their contemporaries.³⁴⁵ The presence of books was not limited to the libraries and studies of the caliphs and the elite, but entered into the wider city landscape, with the huge array of bookshops around the palace of Waḍḍāḥ, near the Baṣra Gate of Baghdad, numbering more than one hundred.³⁴⁶

The bookshops infiltrated the city life — at least, the life of the literate inhabitants — not only as a market, a part of local economy, where books were produced, duplicated, and traded, but also as a space for self-education. The account of the three famous bibliophiles tells us that al-Jāḥiẓ used to rent the shops of booksellers and spend night there, reading books.³⁴⁷ The autodidactic function of the bookshops is echoed in what al-Jāḥiẓ describes as the merits of books:

You learn from it [a book] in a month what you do not learn from the mouths of men in an age. [Learning from a book is] free from tuition (*ghurm*), the burden of asking for things (*kadd al-ṭalab*), standing at the door of those who exploit by teaching, sitting in front of those to whom you are morally and socially superior (*man anta afḍal minhu khuluqan wa-akram minhu 'irqan*), and free from the association with the unpleasant and mingling with the stupid.³⁴⁸

The market of booksellers (*sūq al-warrāqīn*), with its economic activities and its educational and autodidactic potential, attracted *udabā'*, such as Ibn Abī Ṭāhir, as its customers, as well as employees engaged in book production, sale, dissemination, and collection. The shops of *warrāqūn* could also play the role of *majālis* or *andiyat*

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 14.

³⁴⁶ Al-Ya'qūbī, *Kitāb al-buldān*, ed. A.W.T. Juynboll (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1860), 17.

³⁴⁷ Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 130.

³⁴⁸ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*, ed. 'Abd al-Salām M. Hārūn, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Sharikat Maktabat wa-Maṭba'at Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa-Awlādihi, 1965), vl.1, 51.

al-adab, as in the case of Abū ‘Abdallāh al-Azdī.³⁴⁹ Thus, the market of booksellers was a mine of knowledge and the gathering spot of men of letters, where debates were held, and information as well as different opinions were exchanged and circulated.

The burgeoning business of the *warrāqūn*, and the informative and educational value of their shops, certainly exerted tremendous influence on al-Iṣfahānī and his literary production. As we have mentioned previously in Chapter Two, al-Iṣfahānī’s undertaking in compiling the *Aghānī* was related to this industry. He was motivated by the corruption of the text of a book of songs ascribed to Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī, which was, in fact, the work of the *warrāq* employed by Ishāq.³⁵⁰ *Sūq al-warrāqīn* was also the source of al-Iṣfahānī’s *akhbār*. The numerous books used by al-Iṣfahānī attest to the abundance of written materials at his disposal.³⁵¹ These works, of course, could have been procured by various means: from learning circles (*ḥalaqa*) in various venues, including mosques and private houses, or from libraries. Yet, it is beyond doubt that al-Iṣfahānī accessed some of the books or reports in the market of booksellers or via those working there.

Amongst the direct informants in the *Aghānī*, there are names bearing *nisbas* like al-Ṣaḥḥāf and al-Warrāq. The meaning of *warrāq* is explicit: such a person buys and sells books, but could also assume the role of copyist (*nāsikh*).³⁵² *Ṣaḥḥāf*, on the

³⁴⁹ Toorawa, *Ibn Abī Ṭāhir*, 128.

³⁵⁰ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.1, 16.

³⁵¹ Fleischhammer, *die Quellen*, 273–281.

³⁵² Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘arab*, ed. ‘Abdallāh ‘A. al-Kabīr, Muḥammad A. Ḥasaballāh and Hāshim M. al-Shādhilī (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, ND), s.v. “*warrāq*”; al-Zubaydī, *Tāj al-‘arūs min jawāhir al-qāmūs*, ed. Muṣṭafā Ḥijāzī *et alii* (Kuwait: Maṭba‘at al-Ḥukūma, 1990), s.v. “*warrāq*”.

other hand, can denote either those who make or sell paper or books (*ṣaḥīfa*),³⁵³ or those who misread some word in the narration of *ḥadīth*.³⁵⁴ The *nisba* does not necessarily associate its dedicatee with a certain kind of profession, given that it can be an attribute of the family or inherited from an ancestor's profession.³⁵⁵ Thus, the names such as 'Abd al-Waḥḥāb b. 'Ubayd al-Ṣaḥḥāf al-Kūfī and 'Isā b. al-Ḥusayn al-Warrāq, about whom nothing is found in the biographical dictionaries, should be treated with caution.³⁵⁶ They might have been the papermakers, booksellers, or somehow related to this industry, but there is no direct evidence that can buttress such an assumption. Nevertheless, the biographical sources do indicate a connection between al-Iṣfahānī and the book market. For example, the critique against al-Iṣfahānī levelled by Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥusayn al-Nawbakhtī, as mentioned before, attests to his presence in bookshops: "Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī [...] used to enter the market of booksellers while it was abundant and the shops full of books. Then he bought a lot of books and brought them home. All his narrations come from them [books]."³⁵⁷ This report echoes another account, which mentions that al-Iṣfahānī was engaged in a literary discussion in a shop in the *sūq al-warrāqīn* with the poet 'Alī b. Yūsuf b. al-Baqqāl, who was sitting with Abū al-Faṭḥ b. al-Ḥarrāz al-Warrāq.³⁵⁸ As a man of letters settling in Baghdad, it comes as no surprise that the bookshops form one of the backdrops to al-Iṣfahānī's intellectual activity and

³⁵³ Al-Zubaydī, *Tāj al-'arūs*, s.v. "ṣaḥḥāf".

³⁵⁴ Al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī, *Ma'rifaṭ 'ulūm al-ḥadīth wa-kamiyyatihi wa-ajnasīhi*, ed. Aḥmad F. al-Sallūm (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2003), 441–449.

³⁵⁵ For instance, al-Munajjim family means the family of the astrologists, but not every member of it practices this profession: Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 160–161. Another example for this is of the vizier Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Malik, whose *nisba*, al-Zayyāt, is derived from his father's profession as an oil merchant rather than his own: al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.23, 40.

³⁵⁶ Fleischhammer, *die Quellen*, 31, 37, 52, 56, 65 and 72. Al-Iṣfahānī's source 'Abdallāh b. 'Amr b. Abī Sa'd al-Warrāq has an entry in: al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, vl.11, 204, but there is no reference to his profession as a *warrāq*.

³⁵⁷ Al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, vl.13, 339. See page 81.

³⁵⁸ Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, vl.13, 112.

output.

The importance of the bookshops, as well as the *majālis*, lies in the fact that the reports from Category B should not be excluded from our consideration. Although it is not possible to know whether the reports from Category B were ever known to al-Iṣfahānī, it would be committing the fallacy of *argumentum ex silentio* to assume their absence in an urban setting featuring dynamic education as well as the brisk transmission, dissemination, and exchange of knowledge. Furthermore, these reports can also be used to contextualize the discourse as reflected in the compiler's selection and his use of repetition. In other words, in our attempt to reconstruct the pool of reports at al-Iṣfahānī's hand, the reports of the above two categories, with different functions, should be taken into consideration.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have discussed the problems for an investigation into al-Iṣfahānī's selection of material. The reports that might have been available to al-Iṣfahānī can be classified based on the degree of their availability. Category A includes reports sharing common sources with al-Iṣfahānī, while it is impossible to affirm his access to those in Category B, which either go back to sources not found in al-Iṣfahānī's works or do not have *isnāds*.

Due to the nature of oral and aural transmission, reports in Category A are not guaranteed to have been at the compiler's disposal. Therefore, it is important to scrutinize al-Iṣfahānī's use of specific sources to ascertain whether the source in

question can be employed for comparison and reconstruction. By investigating the quantity and kind of reports quoted by al-Iṣfahānī and the possibility of intervention from intermediary transmitters, we may evaluate the extent to which a given source may have been accessible.

In section one (3.1), we discussed the availability of sources from al-Zubayr b. Bakkār as an exemplary framework for inquiry; then, the summaries of the analyses of the works and narrations of Ibn Saʿd, Ibn Qutayba, al-Ṭabarī, and ʿUmar b. Shabba were presented. They are chosen here because we will have recourse to their works and narrations in the following chapters. In the cases of ʿUmar b. Shabba and al-Zubayr b. Bakkār, based on the remarkable number of quotations and the frequency of the parallel mention of intermediaries in the *isnāds*, it can be suggested that the narrations of these two sources were quite accessible for al-Iṣfahānī and their transmission may have been rather stable. The same conclusion may also be applied to Ibn Qutayba's *al-Shiʿr*, of which al-Iṣfahānī seems to have a large part via the recension of Ibrāhīm b. Ayyūb, although the similarity of Ibrāhīm's recension to the original text remains in question. Only a small part of Ibn Saʿd's *Ṭabaqāt* can be used for reconstruction of the repository of reports available to al-Iṣfahānī, whereas al-Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh* was transmitted to al-Iṣfahānī with considerable stability and, based on the quotations, it can be said that at least one certain part of this work is available to him. The results of these analyses must inevitably remain probabilistic, as a result of the scarcity of information about intermediary informants or a limited number of examples. Furthermore, as the narrations are also preserved in later compilations, it is not practical to check whether each narration truly traces back to the given source. Notwithstanding the uncertainties, when a large number of the

reports are incorporated for an investigation, it can be judged with more confidence whether the omission of some report was brought about by al-Iṣfahānī.

As for Category B, although the availability of its reports cannot be evaluated with the same method as for Category A, its importance should not be neglected. With al-Iṣfahānī's association with *majālis* and *sūq al-warrāqīn*, where the exchange of knowledge and ideas as well as intellectual activities took place, these reports may derive from the interaction between the compiler and the context in which his work was produced. That is, whether the reports in this category were available to al-Iṣfahānī or not, they shed light on what the compiler's choice of material may have stood for within the wider discourse in the literate circles of Baghdad.

Part Two

Chapter Four: An Overview of the Analyses: Sectarian Agenda, Genre, Readership, and Limitation of Sources

This chapter, and the next, present the results of the analyses of the selected articles on the Shī'īs and the anti-Shī'īs. These labels are given or noted by al-Iṣfahānī himself, either in the profiles themselves, or alluded to in the reports in the articles themselves or elsewhere in the *Aghānī*. That is, if a subject is said to be a Shī'ī according to other compilers but this denotation is never used by al-Iṣfahānī, he or she is not considered in our analyses. As this thesis explores the compiler's agenda and how it reshapes the sources, whether a subject is truly a Shī'ī or not is not a matter of concern. Thus, al-Iṣfahānī's labelling of a person overrules his or her actual sectarian affiliation. The application of redaction criticism to 26 out of 477 articles in the *Aghānī* will lead to five conclusions.³⁵⁹

First, al-Iṣfahānī was dealing with a genre that is meant for the purpose of entertainment and is quite distinct from martyrology (like his *Maqātil*) as well as conventional historiography (in the form of prosopography, chronography, or biography).³⁶⁰ That is, he had to keep the balance between overburdening his patron and readers with serious themes (*jidd*)³⁶¹ and representing the past in accordance

³⁵⁹ Although the number of the articles presented in this and the next chapters represents only 6% of the whole *Aghānī*, it is worth keeping in mind that other articles that do not meet our requirements for textual analysis may support one or more of the points that this thesis suggests. For further material, see Chapter Six and Appendix Five.

³⁶⁰ Robinson, *Islamic*, 55–79.

³⁶¹ In the preface, al-Iṣfahānī divides the material into two kinds, *hazl* and *jidd*, without any definition. The former presumably comprises the material of historiography, such as *futūḥ*, *ayyām al-'arab*, and

with his agenda. Hence there are exceptions, where al-Iṣfahānī could have included material which invokes the historical memory of the Shīʿīs, such as the martyrdom of al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī, but he does not do so.

Second, the limits of redaction criticism, due to the source material and textual problems, must be acknowledged. Redaction criticism involves an examination of the compiler's selection of material, his juxtaposition of repetitive elements and the overall structure of the single article. In consequence, the results of the analyses are inevitably limited by the level of availability of al-Iṣfahānī's source material. In some cases, the articles are incomplete or perhaps at a preparatory stage. In others, the length of the article or of the extant source inhibits a firm conclusion as to whether the article in question is shaped in accordance with al-Iṣfahānī's sectarian tendency. When the *Aghānī* is the only source for a subject, it is impossible to trace al-Iṣfahānī's selection of material, unless the *isnāds per se* are sufficiently indicative (this, however, seldom happens in the cases examined in this chapter³⁶²). Likewise, some articles are short, without any repetitive element. Thus, the degree of the applicability of redaction criticism varies from one article to another.

Third, redaction criticism reveals that, like modern historians, al-Iṣfahānī was limited by the availability of sources. Al-Iṣfahānī did not invent reports (or at least, the

political history, while the latter denotes the *adab* type of material (for instance, reports about the song, poetry, and court assemblies, *asmār*, and anecdotes). The delineation given here is by no means absolute, as the *futūḥ* and other accounts may give rise to poetry, for example. What is known with certainty, regarding al-Iṣfahānī's editorial principle, is that a prolonged section of either causes boredom and thus should be avoided. See: 2.1.

³⁶² The use of a rare or special source may be indicative of the compiler's editorial concern, but this on its own may be speculative, see for instance the case of Marwān b. Abī Ḥafṣa below, page 161. If al-Iṣfahānī only uses one source for the article, this might indicate the scarcity of information in question, see the case of Nāʾila bint al-Farāfiṣa, page 163.

current research is carried out on the assumption that he did not invent them).³⁶³ Rather, his work is limited to editing, selecting, placing, and repeating the material in circulation. In other words, al-Iṣfahānī was not always able to shape the narrative in accordance with his vision, because what was available to him probably did not leave room for him to do so.

Fourth, al-Iṣfahānī is essentially a prejudiced compiler. Just as the whole *Aghānī* reveals his admiration for Iṣḥāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī and his musical *madhhab*, at the expense of Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī (162–224/779–839), some subjects may have been presented in a favourable light, regardless of their hostile stance towards the Shīʿīs or towards ʿAlī, because al-Iṣfahānī likes them, as he announces explicitly in his comments.³⁶⁴

³⁶³ The hypothetical framework: page 111.

³⁶⁴ Al-Iṣfahānī's favouritism towards Iṣḥāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī is evident. The purpose of al-Iṣfahānī's compilation of the *Aghānī*, as he explains in the preface, is to recover Iṣḥāq's song list, which had been corrupted by copyists' forgeries and false ascriptions. It is Iṣḥāq's definition of the terms of the melodic modes, as opposed to that of Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī, that al-Iṣfahānī adopts in his *Aghānī* for the descriptions of songs. Thus, Iṣḥāq provides one of the motives behind al-Iṣfahānī's mission and his theory of musical modes lays the foundation for the *Aghānī*. In addition, al-Iṣfahānī's veneration for Iṣḥāq is also expressed in his preference for Iṣḥāq's *madhhab* (school or movement) of musical performance over Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī's. Iṣḥāq's *madhhab* adheres to the original performance of the composers and condemns any modification. On the contrary, Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī and his partisans, such as Mukhāriq and Shāriya, hold that they can alter the performance of the traditional songs (*al-ghināʾ al-qadīm*) in whatever way they like. Al-Iṣfahānī's attitude towards the disputes between two camps is clear: "He [Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī] is the first who corrupted the traditional songs. He paved the way for people to audaciously change them." Al-Iṣfahānī criticised Ibrāhīm's innovation as follows: "He [Ibrāhīm] found its supporters amongst those who want to ease the acquisition of songs, hate its hardship and its difficult particulars of compound modes (*adwār*), and opined, out of ignorance, that to learn the original performance of the refined songs is time-consuming." As a result of Ibrāhīm and his supporters' innovation, al-Iṣfahānī complains, the traditional songs are modified generation by generation and are thus no longer performed in the original way. Despite Ibrāhīm's musical talents and extraordinary sound, al-Iṣfahānī is convinced that the winner of the competition between two *madhhabs* is Iṣḥāq: "[...] Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī's corpus is hardly known or transmitted, except for a few items. What he [Ibrāhīm] said about the comparability of the modes (*tajnīs al-ṭarāʾiq*) is abandoned and Iṣḥāq's *madhhab* is followed." Given the above evidence, which shows al-Iṣfahānī's partisanship for Iṣḥāq, the *Aghānī* is by no means an impartial text void of biases. See: al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.1, 15–21; vl.10, 59–60, 124. This partisanship has also been noticed by modern researchers: Khalafallah, *Ṣāhib*, 72–73; Kilpatrick, *Making*, 16–17.

Finally, despite the conclusions above, there is little doubt that al-Iṣfahānī's sectarian tendency constitutes one of his agendas behind the compilation of the *Aghānī*, as a few articles clearly mark his *tashayyu*'.

This last point will be discussed in the next chapter with the articles that show the imprint of al-Iṣfahānī's sectarian tendency. This chapter will illustrate the first four points, with the examples derived from the analyses of the articles to which we have applied redaction criticism.

The examples provided to illustrate each of these conclusions are chosen somewhat arbitrarily, for the purposes of illustration. An analysis that clarifies one of these points may also serve an example of another. For example, the analysis of the biography of Ḥassān b. Thābit shows that al-Iṣfahānī's treatment does not differ from that of the compilers prior to him. This implies that what can be made of Ḥassān b. Thābit was more or less fixed. As a result, there was little al-Iṣfahānī could do to "re-present" this Companion, which illustrates point three, above, about the limits placed on al-Iṣfahānī by his sources. However, in the same article, al-Iṣfahānī enumerates the Prophet's praise of, and permission for, Ḥassān's poetry. This repetitive element can be seen as an attempt to legitimize the role of the poetry, which serves as the lyrics of songs, and, implicitly, the *raison d'être* of a book of songs. In other words, this repetitive element assures al-Iṣfahānī's readers of the legality of the *Aghānī* and can be related to the first point about genre.³⁶⁵ In this chapter, the analysis of Ḥassān is placed in section three (4.3), to illustrate the third conclusion, not because the first point is less important, but because the third point requires more evidence. Moreover,

³⁶⁵ Likewise, the legality of the music is one of the recurrent motifs, see: Kilpatrick, *Making*, 251–254.

this arrangement prevents structural disruption and redundancy. This kind of use the examples will be marked in the footnotes in due course. With this noted, we now turn to the issue of genre and readership.

4.1. Genre and Readership

As implied by its title, the *Aghānī* is not typical historiography, in spite of its inclusion of historical material. It is an *adab* work, subsumed under what is classified by Ibn al-Nadīm as *Akhbār al-nudamā' wa-l-julasā' wa-l-udabā' wa-l-mughannīn wa-l-ṣafādima wa-l-ṣafā'ina wa-l-muḍḥikīn*.³⁶⁶ As mentioned in Chapter One,³⁶⁷ the *Aghānī* was, in all likelihood, dedicated to the vizier, Abū Muḥammad al-Muhallabī. Thus, al-Iṣfahānī compiled the *Aghānī* for the court elite who had an interest in and access to the songs and music. Concern for the interest of the readers is well-illustrated in the preface of the *Aghānī*, where al-Iṣfahānī justifies his unusual arrangement of material as a means to incorporate reports both in earnest and in jest.³⁶⁸ Thus, unsurprisingly, his patron and readers' expectations of this genre impact upon al-Iṣfahānī's editorial concerns, which, in then, determines his presentation of his subjects.

This concern for genre and readership can be shown in al-Iṣfahānī's treatment of al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī. In this article, al-Iṣfahānī could have relayed the whole Karbalā' massacre and he certainly had the access to its accounts — through either al-Ṭabarī's

³⁶⁶ Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 157–173. Although al-Iṣfahānī was himself placed in the category of the *akhbārī* and *nassāb* at pp. 127–128, the musicians who author books of songs appear in this category.

³⁶⁷ See 1.1.4.

³⁶⁸ See 2.1.

narrations³⁶⁹ or his own in the *Maqātil*.³⁷⁰ However, the event is absent from the *Aghānī*, apart from a few peripheral references.³⁷¹

In the article about al-Ḥusayn, al-Iṣfahānī first presents the *nasab* of al-Ḥusayn and then three reports about him.³⁷² After this comes the occasion for which the lyrics of the introductory song was composed — al-Ḥusayn composed it for his wife, al-Rabbāb, and daughter, Sukayna.³⁷³ The account of al-Ḥusayn's marriage with al-Rabbāb and the latter's elegy for the former are mentioned.³⁷⁴ A report about al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥasan's marriage to al-Ḥusayn's daughter, Fāṭima, marks the end of the part on al-Ḥusayn, as al-Iṣfahānī devotes the rest of the article to Sukayna bint al-Ḥusayn.³⁷⁵ The part on Sukayna addresses a number of themes: Sukayna's marriage;³⁷⁶ her playfulness and mischievousness;³⁷⁷ her relationship with her client, Ash'ab;³⁷⁸ a cluster of reports in which she comments on poets such as Jarīr and al-Farazdaq, with the inclusion of the songs;³⁷⁹ and her death.³⁸⁰ Judging from the

³⁶⁹ Al-Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh* was available to al-Iṣfahānī, partially or entirely. See Appendix Four and 3.1.

³⁷⁰ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 53–68; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vl.5, 400–467.

³⁷¹ In the article on al-Ḥusayn, Sukayna reprimanded the Kūfians for the death of al-Ḥusayn. See: al-Iṣfahānī, *Aghānī*, vl.16, 116–117; another reference is found in the article on 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. al-Ḥakam, who elegized al-Ḥusayn when seeing his head in front of Yazīd b. Mu'āwiya: *ibid.*, vl.13, 209.

³⁷² *Ibid.*, vl.16, 102–103. These reports somewhat accentuate al-Ḥusayn's privileged status. The first two relate how al-Ḥusayn was re-named by the Prophet, who changed 'Alī's preferred name, Ḥarb. This kind of report does not reveal a Shī'ī tendency, as it is accepted by a Sunnī source: Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr*, ed. 'Alī M. 'Umar (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 2001), vl.6, 356–357. On the other hand, the third report, which claims that the amulets by al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn were stuffed with the feather from Gabriel's wing, appears more tendentious. Further, this *ḥadīth* does not seem to have circulated widely; beyond the *Aghānī*, the Sunnī compilers reject it as a forgery: al-Dhahabī, *Mīzān*, vl.1, 156; 'Alī Ḥ. 'A. al-Ḥalabī, Ibrāhīm Ṭ. al-Qaysī, and Ḥamdī M. Murād, *Mawsū'at al-aḥādīth wa-l-āthār al-ḍa'īfa wa-l-mawḍū'a* (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Ma'ārif, 1999), vl.12, 291 (31084–31085). While the inclusion of this Shī'ī element may have been related to al-Iṣfahānī's own sectarian conviction, the article no doubt focuses on al-Ḥusayn's daughter.

³⁷³ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.16, 103–104.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, vl.16, 104–105.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, vl.16, 105.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, vl.16, 110–116.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, vl.16, 106–107, 112–113, 116–117.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, vl.16, 107–111, 116–117.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, vl.16, 118–127.

proportions of the article devoted to Sukayna, it is clear that al-Iṣfahānī in fact focuses on Sukayna, who occupies 24 out of 27 pages, not on al-Ḥusayn, who is the subject of the article and the poet of the introductory song. In addition, the anecdotes about Sukayna and the inclusion of the protracted section on the songs and poetry suggest that al-Iṣfahānī, in this article, is inclined towards material that suits the genre of the *Aghānī*, namely, the jesting reports.

It may be argued that al-Iṣfahānī shifts the focus to Sukayna because he tends to avoid repeating what he has related in other works and al-Ḥusayn's martyrdom is detailed in his *Maqātil*.³⁸¹ While this view has some validity, it fails to explain why al-Iṣfahānī repeats some accounts of the *Maqātil* in the *Aghānī* — for instance, the article on Ibn Mu'āwiya.³⁸² The impact of the patron and readership can better explain al-Iṣfahānī's preference for the accounts about Sukayna in this case, as well as his interpolation of the light-hearted reports in other cases, such as in the account of the Battle of Badr.³⁸³ This does not mean that al-Iṣfahānī abstains from all non-secular themes in his compilation. As he stipulates in the preface, the serious material constitutes an indispensable component of the *Aghānī*. Therefore, there exist the accounts of *ayyām al-ʿarab*, *al-sīra al-nabawiyya*, and historical events bearing

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, vl.16, 127–128.

³⁸¹ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 53–68.

³⁸² Al-Iṣfahānī guides his readers to his other works, when discussion of a certain topic would inevitably prolong. For instance, on the issue of the *ʿilal al-nagham* and the genealogy, he refers to his treatise and *Kitāb al-nasab*: al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.1, 24; vl.8, 292–293. See the next footnote 383; other examples can be found in the articles about ʿAbdallāh b. al-Ḥasan and Muḥammad b. Ṣāliḥ: *al-Aghānī*, vl.16, 282–292; vl.21, 92–102; *idem*, *Maqātil*, 166–171, 184–204, 480–490.

³⁸³ For instance, a comparison between al-Iṣfahānī's treatment of Ibn Mu'āwiya in the *Aghānī* and that in the *Maqātil* shows that al-Iṣfahānī adds some song-related material in the *Aghānī*, which is absent in the *Maqātil*, to meet what is expected from a book of songs. Likewise, Kilpatrick's study on al-Iṣfahānī's reshaping of the account of Badr, which is based on al-Ṭabarī, also supports this conclusion. See: al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.12, 171–190; *idem*, *Maqātil*, 152–159; Kilpatrick, *Making*, 153–155.

Shī‘ī tinge, such as the death of Ḥujr b. ‘Adī.³⁸⁴ Yet, in some cases, when al-Iṣfahānī has material that has potential to entertain his patron and readers more, and is more suitable for his *Book of Songs*, he includes it. As the readership comprises courtiers and men of letters who read a book of songs for fun or to learn tips on how to be rewarded,³⁸⁵ what can better meet their expectation than anecdotes about Sukayna — a great patroness of singers³⁸⁶ — and her famous buffoon, Ash‘ab?³⁸⁷

Although the cases of al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī and Ḥassān b. Thābit, mentioned above, are the only ones that reveal concerns with patron and readership in the samples I analysed, it is clear that the *Aghānī* — an *adab* compilation devoted to music, songs, and poetry — has to maintain the balance between digression into serious accounts, where the compiler could articulate his views, and farces that could entertain his patron and readers.

4.2. The Limits of Redaction Criticism

There are articles where redaction criticism can contribute little, for three reasons. First, where information about the subjects is either only available in the *Aghānī* or found only in a very terse form in other compilations, it is difficult to investigate al-Iṣfahānī’s selection of material. Secondly, where the articles *per se* are short and do not contain any repeated element that can indicate the compiler’s emphasis,

³⁸⁴ Apart from the pre-Islamic tribal sagas, such as *Ḥarb al-Basūs*, the *sīra*-material (for instance, the Battle of Badr), makes its way into the *Aghānī*: al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.4, 139–171; vl.5, 27–45; vl.17, 98–113. Furthermore, see: Kilpatrick, *Making*, 291–320.

³⁸⁵ The patron relationship constitutes one of the most dominant themes in the *Aghānī*. See: Kilpatrick, *Making*, 172–176; 247–251.

³⁸⁶ Apart from al-Iṣfahānī’s treatment of al-Ḥusayn’s article, numerous references to Sukayna in the *Aghānī* illustrate her association with musicians and poets, see for instance: vl.17, 34–43.

³⁸⁷ For further discussion on Ash‘ab in Arabic literature, see: Kilpatrick, “The ‘genuine’ Ash‘ab”, 94–117.

redaction criticism is of little use. Thirdly, textual problems in the article can confound any firm conclusion, as shown in the article on Marwān b. Abī al-Janūb (hereafter, Marwān Junior). For any of the above reasons, the ways to identify al-Iṣfahānī's editorial activity are restricted in these analyses. Thus, although the text may contain references that can be read as sectarian articulations, it is difficult to establish such elements as deliberate renderings by al-Iṣfahānī. Before delving into the results of the analyses, we will begin with a list of the articles included in this section and specify the reason for their inclusion (on a Shī'ī or an anti-Shī'ī). The second column notes the location in which al-Iṣfahānī acknowledges these labels. The list is in alphabetical order.

Subject	Volume/Page	Reason for Inclusion
Al-ʿAbī	11/219	A Hāshimī partisan; joined the revolt of Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh b. al-Ḥasan (al-Nafs al-Zakiyya)
Dīk al-Jinn ³⁸⁸	14/38	A Shī'ī poet
Juʿayfirān	20/145	A mad Shī'ī poet, associated with imam al-Kāzīm
Manṣūr al-Namirī	13/110-111	A Shī'ī poet, but under the patronage of the ʿAbbāsids
Marwān b. Abī al-Janūb	12/62 23/168	An ʿAbbāsīd poet; propagated the ʿAbbāsids' legitimacy against the ʿAlids
Muḥammad b. Wuhayb	19/58	A Shī'ī poet

Table 4.2. The Subjects Addressed in 4.2.

These six articles illustrate the limits of redaction criticism. While the article about Marwān Junior, which illustrates the point about textual problems, will be discussed in the second subsection (4.2.2), the rest of the articles will be addressed in the next subsection (4.2.1).

4.2.1. The Methodological Limits

³⁸⁸ Based on the *sanads*, it may be tentatively suggested that al-Iṣfahānī had very limited sources; see 4.3, particularly page 154.

This subsection discusses the five articles about al-‘Ablī, Dīk al-Jinn, Ju‘ayfirān, Manṣūr al-Namirī, and Muḥammad b. Wuhayb. There is very little information on these biographies outside the *Aghānī*. In these five cases, there seem to be some Shī‘ī elements, but the lack of source material makes it impossible to ascertain al-Iṣfahānī’s own redaction. Following alphabetical order, we will begin with the article about al-‘Ablī.

4.2.1.1. Al-‘Ablī

Al-‘Ablī was an Umayyad descendant (from Umayya al-Aṣghar’s lineage), living in the late Umayyad and the early ‘Abbāsīd periods. However, he was a partisan of Banū Hāshim during the Umayyad period, because he did not receive due treatment (*ṣun‘ jamīl*) from his relatives. Thus, he was spared during the persecution of the Umayyads at the hand of the ‘Abbāsīds. Later, he revolted with Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh b. al-Ḥasan against al-Manṣūr.³⁸⁹ The key themes of the article comprise al-‘Ablī’s relationship with the ‘Abbāsīds (hunted by Dāwūd b. ‘Alī, forgiven by al-Saffāḥ, and finally banished by al-Manṣūr),³⁹⁰ his relationship with Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh and his family (received their rewards and was appointed to govern Yemen by Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh),³⁹¹ his interaction with the Umayyads, especially with the caliph, Hishām b. ‘Abd al-Malik, and his poetry on the Banū Umayya.³⁹² There are three places where Shī‘ī ideology can be discerned.

First, in the profile, al-Iṣfahānī quotes a *rajaz* referring to the great-grandfather of

³⁸⁹ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.11, 218–219.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, vl.11, 219–221, 224.

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*, vl.11, 221–224.

³⁹² *Ibid.*, vl.11, 224–229.

al-‘Ablī, ‘Alī b. ‘Adī, who fought with ‘Ā’isha during the Battle of the Camel. Al-Iṣfahānī curses the Ḍabbī poet, who, in the quoted verse, implored God to trip up ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib’s camel, by adding the phrase, “God’s curse upon him (*la ‘nat Allāh ‘alayhi*).”³⁹³

Second, there seems to be a narrative parallel between al-‘Ablī’s encounter with al-Manṣūr and his encounter with Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh and his family. The poet was requested by both to recite his poetry for his kinsfolk, the Banū Umayya, but the results differ greatly. While al-Manṣūr, irritated by al-‘Ablī’s praise for the Umayyads, banished him, al-‘Ablī received a great sum in rewards from the ‘Alids for reciting his elegy on his relatives. This parallel, formed by the repetitive element (reciting his poetry on his kinsfolks, *qawm*), marks not only a contrast of the parsimony of al-Manṣūr and the generosity of the ‘Alids, but also implies the possibility of a historical reconciliation. In this second report, Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh cried after listening to the elegy. His uncle said: “You cried for Banū Umayya, while you are about to revolt against the ‘Abbāsids?” At this, Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh replied: “O uncle, we used to bear grudges against the Banū Umayya as we did, but the Banū ‘Abbās were nothing but less God-fearing than them. Verily, the pretext against them [Banū Umayya] is more justifiable against the Banū ‘Abbās and the people [Banū Umayya] had virtues, nobility, and dignity, which Abū Ja‘far does not have.”³⁹⁴ It can be suggested that al-Iṣfahānī tries to emphasise the reconciliation and compromise reached amongst the Shī‘īs and the Umayyads in this article — an important issue for him as an Umayyad Shī‘ī — because, in another place where he

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, vl.11, 218.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, vl.11, 222.

narrates the same report, he does not include the dialogue.³⁹⁵

The third place where a Shī'ī perspective can be discerned is in a report about a group of Umayyads who reprimanded al-'Ablī because he disliked the Umayyad practice of cursing 'Alī from the pulpits in Mecca. As a result, al-'Ablī moved to Medina and composed a poem, in which he articulates his dedication to partisanship for 'Alī and states that any love not for 'Alī is worldly (*dunyāwī*), while the love for 'Alī is pietistic (*ḥubb al-dīn*).³⁹⁶

Although the curse on the Ḍabbī poet can be seen as a typical Shī'ī reaction, a Sunnī embracing the idea of the four *khulafā'* *rāshidūn* would also have been uneasy at such an invocation. Thus, this reference in the profile *per se* is not enough to illustrate a particular sectarian vision. On the other hand, the attempt to resolve the historical hostility between the Umayyads and Shī'īs and the reference in the poem may have originated from al-Iṣfahānī's editorial hand, but it is hard to know what would have been at his disposal.³⁹⁷

³⁹⁵ Another report is found in the article about Abū Sa'īd, the composer of al-'Ablī's poem, which is dedicated to 'Abdallāh b. al-Ḥasan: *ibid.*, vl.4, 262–263. An attempt to resolve the historical conflict between the Umayyads and the 'Alids is also found in al-Iṣfahānī's comment on the practice of *tashātum* between the Umayyads and Hāshimīs led by Sūdayf and Sabbāb — an act of the stupid, according to al-Iṣfahānī: vl.4, 265, 268–272; vl.16, 99–101. Another reference to this is made via the horrendous scene of al-Saffāh's slaughter of the Umayyads: vl.9, 146–147. Also, the reaction of the Umayyad, 'Abd al-Raḥmān, to the severed head of al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī and his lampoon against Ziyād b. Abīhi both illustrate this sentiment: vl.13, 208–211. This motif is also present in Marwān b. Muḥammad's lenient manner toward Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh (al-Nafs al-Zakiyya) and his father, 'Abdallāh b. al-Ḥasan: *idem*, *Maqātil*, 228–229.

³⁹⁶ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.11, 224–225.

³⁹⁷ Although al-Iṣfahānī's redaction of the report about the encounter between al-'Ablī and al-Nafs al-Zakiyya shows that al-Iṣfahānī abridged the account where appropriate, this editorial decision may have been due to an unstated reason other than al-Iṣfahānī's attempt to emphasise the possibility of reconciliation between the 'Alids and the Umayyads. Furthermore, we do not know what kind of material about this figure was in circulation, because, apart from the *Aghānī*, information about al-'Ablī is only found, in terse form, in al-Zubayrī, *Nasab Quraysh*, ed. Evariste Lévi-Provençal (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1953), 158; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, ed. Suhayl Zakkār and Riyād Ziriklī (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1996), vl.9, 382.

Overall, in the article about al-‘Ablī, the limitations of the evidence prevent redaction criticism from being used to assess al-Iṣfahānī’s editorial involvement. Thus, it is hard to know to what extent al-Iṣfahānī intended to emphasise these themes, reconciliation and the Shī‘ī agenda. Similar conclusions are reached in the cases of Ju‘ayfirān, Dīk al-Jinn, Maṣṣūr al-Namirī, and Muḥammad b. Wuhayb.

4.2.1.2 Ju‘ayfirān

In the article on Ju‘ayfirān, most of the reports are given to contextualise the poetry,³⁹⁸ except for an account of how the poet lost his mind. Ju‘ayfirān’s father, also a Shī‘ī, found Ju‘ayfirān having an affair with his concubine. He expelled his son from his house and complained to imam Mūsā, who responded: “If what you said is true, then he will lose his mind before his death.” In spite of the subsequent dramas, the imam’s prophesy came true.³⁹⁹ Certainly, this report is a testament to the thaumaturgic power of imam Mūsā al-Kāẓim, but the article and the existing literature do not shed light on what al-Iṣfahānī aims to convey as a compiler: was he emphasizing the status of al-Kāẓim or simply including whatever was available to him?⁴⁰⁰

4.2.1.3. Dīk al-Jinn

A similar situation is found in the article about Dīk al-Jinn (161–235/778–850), a Shī‘ī Shu‘ūbī poet settled in Ḥimṣ and the hero of that city’s gossip, according to

³⁹⁸ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.20, 146–152.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, vl.20, 145–146.

⁴⁰⁰ Other compilations contain very limited information: al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, vl.8, 44–45; al-Jāhiz, *al-Bayān wa-l-tabayīn*, ed. ‘Abd al-Salām M. Hārūn, 7th ed. (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1998), vl.2, 225–227.

which he killed his beloved slave girl and *ghulām* out of jealousy. The article includes a lengthy quotation from his poetry for Ja‘far b. ‘Alī al-Hāshimī.⁴⁰¹ Whether this inclusion is indicative of al-Iṣfahānī’s Shī‘ī agenda is hard to determine, as the article *per se* is short and al-Iṣfahānī seems to have limited sources at his disposal: the book of Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir and ‘Āṣim b. Muḥammad’s transmission of Dīk al-Jinn’s poetry.⁴⁰²

4.2.1.4. Maṣṣūr al-Namirī

Maṣṣūr al-Namirī, an ‘Abbāsīd poet and a student of the poet, al-‘Attābī, was originally settled in Jazīra; he moved to Baghdad after al-‘Attābī introduced his poetry to al-Faḍl b. Yaḥyā al-Barmakī.⁴⁰³ Learning about Hārūn al-Rashīd’s preference for propagandistic poetry, which would bolster the ‘Abbāsids’ legitimacy and undermine ‘Alid claims, he imitated Marwān Senior’s style (*madhhab*) in his composition of poetry, but never explicitly lampooned or cursed the ‘Alids like Marwān Senior, due to his Shī‘ī tendency (*kāna yatashayya‘u*).⁴⁰⁴ The article addresses the following issues: Maṣṣūr’s competition with Marwān Senior for al-Rashīd’s favour;⁴⁰⁵ his death, which coincides with al-Rashīd’s wrath against him after al-Rashīd discovered his Shī‘ī sympathy;⁴⁰⁶ his conduct, such as abstaining

⁴⁰¹ The gossip: Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*, ed. ‘Umar b. Gh. al-‘Amrī (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1995), vl.36, 206–207; al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.14, 40–42.

⁴⁰² Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.14, 39, 46. Although Ibn ‘Asākir has an entry for Dīk al-Jinn, most of his sources do not appear to have been available to al-Iṣfahānī. Furthermore, what they relate about this poet is essentially similar — the poet’s hedonistic life and the gossip mentioned above; cf. Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīkh*, vl.36, 201–209. Another reference to the poet is probably comprised more of fiction than of truth: Abū al-‘Alā’ al-Ma‘arrī, *Risālat al-ghuḥfrān*, ed. Muḥammad al-Iskadarānī and In‘ām Rawwāl (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, 2008), 319–320.

⁴⁰³ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.13, 110.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, vl.13, 110–111.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, vl.13, 111–115.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, vl.13, 115–118.

from *nabīdh*,⁴⁰⁷ and his relation with his teacher, al-‘Attābī.⁴⁰⁸

While al-Iṣfahānī mentions Manṣūr’s demise — which happened in timely fashion, when al-Rashīd had ordered that he be persecuted — as the compilers before him did,⁴⁰⁹ he offers an alternative account: Manṣūr was eventually pardoned by the caliph with the help of al-Faḍl b. al-Rabī‘.⁴¹⁰ It is not clear whether this alternative account has any further implication, but it seems that the circumstances in which Manṣūr died were disputed.⁴¹¹ Although referring to his *tashayyu*‘, al-Iṣfahānī never specifies his sectarian affiliation, unlike Ibn al-Mu‘tazz, who claims that Manṣūr was an Imāmī.⁴¹² Furthermore, in the *Aghānī*, al-Iṣfahānī does not quote much of Manṣūr’s poetry for *ahl al-bayt*, which, in Ibn al-Mu‘tazz’s view, is exquisite, despite his awareness of this kind of material.⁴¹³ It is hard to explain al-Iṣfahānī’s silence concerning Manṣūr’s Imāmī affiliation and the absence of his panegyrics for the ‘Alids. The information offered by al-Iṣfahānī and other compilers is not sufficiently copious for redaction criticism to identify his editorial hand in this case, although there are some elements that seem relevant to the articulation of a sectarian agenda.⁴¹⁴

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, vl.13, 118–121.

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, vl.13, 121–124.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibn Qutayba, *al-Shi‘r wa-l-shu‘arā*, ed. Aḥmad M. Shākir, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1958), 859–862; Ibn al-Mu‘tazz, Abū al-‘Abbās ‘Abdallāh, *Ṭabaqāt al-shu‘arā*, ed. ‘Abd al-Sattār A. Farrāj, 3rd ed. (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1976), 243–244.

⁴¹⁰ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.13, 117–118.

⁴¹¹ Al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *Āmālī al-Murtaḍā* (or *Ghurur al-fawā'id wa-durar al-qalā'id*), ed. Muḥammad A. Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār Iḥyā' al-Kutub al-‘Arabiyya, 1954), vl.2, 277.

⁴¹² Ibn al-Mu‘tazz, *Ṭabaqāt*, 244. Likewise, Ibn Ḥazm relates that he used to be a Khārījī and later converted to Imāmī Shī‘ism: *Jamharat*, 302.

⁴¹³ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 427.

⁴¹⁴ It is noteworthy that al-Iṣfahānī offers the most abundant information about Manṣūr al-Namirī and thus later became the main source for al-Khaṭīb: *Tārīkh*, vl.15, 73–80.

4.2.1.5. Muḥammad b. Wuhayb

The last case, Muḥammad b. Wuhayb, is similar to that of Ju‘ayfirān. The reports are mostly related to the verses,⁴¹⁵ although there are two reports illustrating the *tashayyu‘* of the poet.⁴¹⁶ Overall, like the results of the other analyses, too little is known about this poet to allow a conclusion regarding al-Iṣfahānī’s editorial activity.⁴¹⁷

The biographies examined in this section do seem to contain some Shī‘ī elements. To some extent, these elements may be read as an articulation of al-Iṣfahānī’s Shī‘ī agenda. However, what the reports relate must be distinguished from what may have been put forward through al-Iṣfahānī’s editorial hand; otherwise, like al-A‘ẓamī, we fall into a superficial reading of the *Aghānī*. That is, whether these cases reveal a sectarian agenda ought to be judged by an assessment of al-Iṣfahānī’s editorial activity, rather than by a random interpretation of the reports. It would be haphazard to read what reports appear to say as what al-Iṣfahānī is trying to convey. As stated in the main Introduction, the application of redaction criticism is carried out on the premise that al-Iṣfahānī was a compiler. Thus, his authorial voice lies in how he edits the material, instead of the material that he cites *per se*.⁴¹⁸ In the cases examined in this section, as the source material and the articles themselves prevent an investigation of al-Iṣfahānī’s involvement as a redactor, whether these biographies serve as evidence of his sectarian agenda remains questionable.

⁴¹⁵ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.19, 58–74.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*, vl.19, 65–66.

⁴¹⁷ Apart from the *Aghānī*, Ibn al-Mu‘tazz narrates an anecdote about him: *Ṭabaqāt*, 310–313.

⁴¹⁸ See the Introduction, especially page 41.

4.2.2. An Incomplete Article: the Case of Marwān Junior

This subsection focuses on an analysis of a problematic article, which seems to have been left in either unfinished or in an early state of preparation — the biography of Marwān b. Abī al-Janūb al-Aṣghar, or ‘Marwān Junior’ (d. c.240/855), who lampooned the ‘Alids for the sake of ‘Abbāsīd propaganda.⁴¹⁹ As we have mentioned in Chapter Two, the *Aghānī* may have not been completed. Apart from the misplacement of the order of the articles, some reports are seemingly unfinished. In some articles, part of the text appears incomplete, but it is hard to tell, in these cases, whether it was lost or never existed.⁴²⁰ As the *Aghānī* is such a gigantic work, it is reasonable to assume that the compiler may have written a few drafts for an article and redacted them after a while. Yet, as the *Aghānī* is not complete, some articles may remain in a preliminary state.⁴²¹ This seems to be the case with the article about Marwān Junior. Despite this textual flaw, it is nonetheless possible to examine al-Iṣfahānī’s editorial activity in this case, because there are two articles about Marwān Junior in the *Aghānī* and their chronological sequence may be recovered on the basis of an editorial remark by al-Iṣfahānī.

The two articles about Marwān Junior, both of which are introduced by the same song, are located respectively in volumes 12 and 23. The layout of each article is presented in the table below. The left-hand column illustrates the article in volume 12, the right that in volume 23. The former consists of nine reports, represented by M

⁴¹⁹ Apart from the *Aghānī*, the following sources confirm his anti-Shī‘ī tendency: al-Marzubānī, *Mu‘jam al-shu‘arā’*, ed. Fārūq Aslīm (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 2005), 374 (712); Ibn al-Mu‘tazz, *Ṭabaqāt*, 393.

⁴²⁰ See 2.3. See also: Kilpatrick, *Making*, 31–32.

⁴²¹ On the working process of pre-modern compilers, see: Robinson, *Islamic*, 184–185.

plus a serial number; the latter comprises eleven accounts, represented by *M* plus an italicized serial number. An outline of each report is given.

Marwān the Junior in vl.12		Marwān the Junior in vl.23	
M1	Panegyric for al-Mutawakkil	<i>M1</i>	Panegyric for al-Mutawakkil
M2	Supplement to M1	<i>M2</i>	Panegyric for al-Mutawakkil against Shī'ī claims
M3	With 'Alī b. al-Jahm	<i>M3</i>	Carrier pigeon
M4	With 'Alī b. al-Jahm	<i>M4</i>	Panegyric for al-Mutawakkil
M5	Panegyric for al-Mu'taṣim	<i>M5</i>	Humiliated by Khālīd
M6	Panegyric for Ashnās	<i>M6</i>	With al-Mutawakkil
M7	Lampoons with 'Alī b. Yahyā	<i>M7</i>	Rejected by al-Muntaṣir
M8	Carrier pigeon	<i>M8</i>	With 'Alī b. al-Jahm
M9	His <i>sariqa</i> ; 'Alī b. al-Jahm	<i>M9</i>	'Alī b. al-Jahm's contempt for him
		<i>M10</i>	With Ibn Abī Du'ād
		<i>M11</i>	With 'Abdallāh b. Ṭāhir

Table 4.2.2 Two Articles on Marwān Junior

In terms of their contents, these two articles only share one identical report: the report M8 in vl.12 and *M3* in vl.23.⁴²² The reports in the two articles, twenty in totality, essentially narrate different accounts concerning Marwān Junior. Although M1 and *M4* refer to the same poem, both the *isnāds* and the contents differ.⁴²³ Nonetheless, it is clear that there are a few themes relating to Marwān Junior to which al-Iṣfahānī devotes special attention in both versions, such as his encounters with 'Alī b. al-Jahm and his relations with the caliphs, al-Mutawakkil in particular, as well as with other courtiers.

According to Kilpatrick, these two articles look like the preparatory drafts, which were to be put together at the end. Yet, as the *Aghānī* was unfinished, they were left separate.⁴²⁴ This seems a plausible explanation. In fact, it may be further suggested

⁴²² Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.12, 66–67; vl.23, 169.

⁴²³ The *isnād* of the former is: uncle and al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī; while of the latter: uncle and al-Muhallabī, see: *ibid.*, vl.12, 62–63; vl.23, 169.

⁴²⁴ Kilpatrick, *Making*, 265–266.

that the article in vl.23 was a more refined draft, written after that in vl.12, based on an editorial note in vl.12. At the end of report M8 in vl.12, al-Iṣfahānī writes:

Jahḥa narrated to me from ‘Alī b. Yaḥyā: Marwān b. Abī al-Janūb recited his verses to al-Mutawakkil:

I stayed in the courtyard of al-Mutawakkil and you in the furthest abode of al-Mawṣil.

Then, someone present there asked: “How are the contact and correspondence possible?” Answered Abū al-‘Anbasa al-Ṣaymarī: “He had a carrier pigeon that was sent to him from al-Mawṣil; thus, the correspondence was done by its wings.” Al-Mutawakkil laughed to the extent that he lay down; Marwān was embarrassed and swore by his marriage that he would not speak to Abū al-‘Anbasa again. They died without their friendship being repaired. This is the furthest I can remember from what Jahḥa told me from ‘Alī b. Yaḥyā, as I wrote this from my memory.⁴²⁵

For the same report, *M3*, in vl.23, al-Iṣfahānī has become more assured when taking down the *isnād*: the last sentence in M8 is not found here. Furthermore, the content of *M3* also echoes his assertiveness: “someone”, in M8, is identified in *M3* with al-Faṭḥ b. Khāqān.⁴²⁶ This implies that, in the first draft, namely, the article in vl.12, al-Iṣfahānī did not have his notes to hand, but, later, he was able to clarify the obscurity when reworking the draft.

The article in vl.23 may have been a refined version. However, it is hard to tell how al-Iṣfahānī would have eventually put together the two articles on Marwān Junior and whether he would have kept all the reports. Furthermore, due to the limited information about Marwān Junior available elsewhere, it is not possible to

⁴²⁵ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.12, 66–67.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*, vl.23, 169.

investigate al-Iṣfahānī's selection of material.⁴²⁷ That said, an editorial remark in an *isnād* may shed light on al-Iṣfahānī's attitude towards Marwān Junior, when he compiled the reports about Marwān Junior.

In the exchange of lampoons between Marwān Junior and 'Alī b. Yaḥyā al-Munajjim (M7), al-Iṣfahānī (or his informant) took out the former's verses against the latter in order to spare 'Alī (*ṣiyānatan li-'Alī*),⁴²⁸ but kept the latter's lampoon:

You told the truth, by my life! Your father is not comparable with mine. Who shall compare the highness with the lowness?

Do you even have the pure pedigree to compare with, when then the pedigrees were compared with mine?

Aren't you the clients of the bastard and his kinsfolk, the enemies of the Banū 'Abbās of the pure lineage?

You support those who opposed the Prophet and their people and accuse those who supported the virtuous of the rejection (*al-rafd*).

It is not strange that I show disgruntlement towards you, because you deserve the hostility and hatred.⁴²⁹

This sort of account casts Marwān Junior in an unfavourable light. Al-Iṣfahānī also reminds his readers of Marwān Junior's humble origin, which is addressed in the article on Marwān Senior.⁴³⁰ Whether this comment (that is, the omission of Marwān Junior's lampoon against 'Alī b. Yaḥyā) comes from al-Iṣfahānī or his source, its

⁴²⁷ In addition to what we mentioned in footnote 419, terse information can be found Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, vl.5, 193; al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, vl.15, 197–198.

⁴²⁸ The lampoon of Marwān Junior against 'Alī b. Yaḥyā was likely omitted by al-Iṣfahānī, because the report states: "*taraktu dhikrahā ṣiyānatan li-'Alī b. Yaḥyā*." When al-Iṣfahānī inserts a comment, he routinely uses the first person singular or plural voice. See the examples listed in: Sallūm, *Dirāsāt*, 56–97; Kilpatrick, *Making*, 94–104, 111–119. Furthermore, al-Iṣfahānī's attempt to spare 'Alī b. Yaḥyā can be viewed in light of the latter's contribution to the *Aghānī* as a source of reports, as well as one of the versions of the lists of The Hundred Songs. See: al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.1, 17–18, 21, and the indices, "Alī b. Yaḥyā", in vl.25, 161.

⁴²⁹ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.12, 66.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*, vl.10, 61–66.

inclusion in the article implies the attitude of the compiler: there is no need to present an enemy of ‘Alī positively.

To recapitulate the analysis of the articles on Marwān Junior, it seems that these articles were to be combined together, but that al-Iṣfahānī was not able to do so. It can be suggested that the article in vl.23 is a reworked draft post-dating that in vl.12, given al-Iṣfahānī’s remark. The inclusion of the editorial remark does suggest his lack of concern for Marwān Junior’s dignity, but a firm conclusion must be withheld, because we do not know what al-Iṣfahānī would have made out of the two articles.

In short, the articles examined in this section (4.2) highlighted the limits of redaction criticism with the *Aghānī*. Due to lack of information, textual incompleteness or the length of articles, al-Iṣfahānī’s editorial interventions are hard to ascertain. It seems that there are elements that can be read as indicators of his Shī‘ī agenda, but little can be said on the basis of al-Iṣfahānī’s redaction.

4.3. The Limitations of the Source Material

This section addresses al-Iṣfahānī’s editorial activity and how it relates to the source material. As a compiler, whose work is limited to collecting and arranging existing sources, al-Iṣfahānī’s editorial hand is restrained by the availability of the reports. For instance, al-Iṣfahānī could portray al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī as favourably as possible, but in no way he can reverse the established fact that al-Ḥasan abdicated the caliphate in favour of Mu‘āwiya in 41/661 — this is al-Iṣfahānī’s exact perception of the event.⁴³¹

⁴³¹ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 57–84.

In other words, the limits of the source material at his disposal determine how al-Iṣḫānī presents his subjects. The question is: how do we know whether al-Iṣḫānī was restrained by the sources available to him when compiling articles? If the information about a given subject is available in a number of compilations outside the *Aghānī* — an indication of the accessibility and dissemination of reports about him or her — and the accounts by and large agree with what al-Iṣḫānī says, then this suggests that the sources about this subject may have reached a consensus as to what key elements are to be recounted when it comes to his or her biography. The existence of such a consensus in some cases means that it is possible that al-Iṣḫānī accepted the established narrative and found it consistent with his agenda, rather than wanting to reshape the whole narrative but being unable to due to the limitation of the source material.⁴³² To what extent al-Iṣḫānī was content with the material he presented remains a question to which no answer can be given without his editorial remarks, none of which, unfortunately, are to be found within the articles examined in this section. Nonetheless, what is known through our analyses is that al-Iṣḫānī's treatment of these biographies is not different from that by other compilers, which implies that the sources he had to hand may have limited his editorial freedom, whether he liked it or not. Below is a list of the articles included in this section. The reasons for their inclusion and the locations of the labels given by al-Iṣḫānī are specified in the list, which is in alphabetical order.

Subject	Volume/Page	Reason for Inclusion
Abū al-ʿIbar	23/167	An ʿAbbāsīd poet hostile towards ʿAlids
Abū al-Ṭufayl	15/110	A Companion and partisan of ʿAlī
Ḥassān b. Thābit ⁴³³	16/177	Companion of ʿUthmānī sympathy; against ʿAlī in the first

⁴³² Donner, *Narratives*, 137–138.

⁴³³ The rendering of this article also reveals al-Iṣḫānī's concern for genre and readership, as discussed in 4.1.

		<i>fitna</i>
Marwān b. Abī Hafṣa (Marwān Senior) ⁴³⁴	10/175	An ‘Abbāsīd poet propagating the ‘Abbāsids’ legitimacy against the ‘Alids
Al-Nābigha al-Ja’dī	5/10	With ‘Alī at Ṣiffīn
Nā’ila bint al-Farāfiṣa ⁴³⁵	16/253–254	The widow of ‘Uthmān, who had instigated Mu‘āwiya to take revenge
Al-Nu‘mān b. Bashīr ⁴³⁶	16/24–5	A Companion of ‘Uthmānī partisanship; in alignment with Mu‘āwiya during the first <i>fitna</i>
Al-Walīd b. ‘Uqba	5/89	A Companion and the half-brother of ‘Uthmān; hostile towards ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib

Table 4.3. Articles Examined in 4.3.

Based on the order of the list, we will outline the structure and the main contents of each article, before summarising the analysis.

4.3.1. Abū al-‘Ibar

The article about Abū al-‘Ibar (died *c.*250/864) extends to only seven pages, focusing on two themes: first, Abū al-‘Ibar deliberately chose the career of a *sukhfiyya* poet and made a great profit from it, despite having the ability to compose refined poems;⁴³⁷ secondly, his buffoonery.⁴³⁸ The only serious report in the article is the account of his death. Abū al-‘Ibar was hostile towards ‘Alī and had lampooned the ‘Alids. When he went hunting with his companions in Kūfa, some Kūfans overheard him vilifying ‘Alī and killed him in a fortress.⁴³⁹ As a clown and buffoon, the reports about his ludicrous behaviour, such as being flung by a catapult into a pond and rescued out of the water in a fishing net, should not be viewed as defamatory,⁴⁴⁰ as

⁴³⁴ To some extent, our knowledge concerning Marwān Senior is limited to the *Aghānī*; thus, this case also illustrates the second conclusion: the limits of redaction criticism, see 4.2.

⁴³⁵ The information about Nā’ila is very limited; thus, this article may arguably be seen as an example of the second conclusion: the limit of redaction criticism.

⁴³⁶ There are some references to al-Iṣfahānī’s concern for genre, as addressed in 4.1.

⁴³⁷ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.23, 161–162, 166.

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*, vl.23, 162–165.

⁴³⁹ *Ibid.*, vl.23, 167.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, vl.23, 164–165.

similar accounts about Abū al-‘Ibar are found in other compilations and jesting reports are rather common in the *Aghānī*.⁴⁴¹ This account of his death and his anti-‘Alīd tendency are also attested in other works.⁴⁴²

In other words, al-Iṣfahānī’s presentation of Abū al-‘Ibar agrees with other compilations and, in the context of a book of songs, such a presentation cannot be viewed as negative. Although Abū al-‘Ibar is not negatively portrayed — as the source material probably did not allow al-Iṣfahānī to do so, if he ever so intended — it is hard to discern al-Iṣfahānī’s editorial intervention through analysis.

4.3.2. Abū al-Ṭufayl

The article on Abū al-Ṭufayl ‘Āmir b. Wāthila (3–100/625–718), which takes up six printed pages, tackles a number of themes: Abū al-Ṭufayl’s *ṣuḥba*,⁴⁴³ his narration of the *tafsīr*-material from ‘Alī,⁴⁴⁴ and his poetry (including the contexts evoked via his composition or via the recitation of the verses).⁴⁴⁵ Despite a report recounting his encounter with Mu‘āwiya after the death of ‘Alī, which illustrates his partisanship, what al-Iṣfahānī relays in the *Aghānī* seems consistent with the overall conception of

⁴⁴¹ Here I exclude al-Ṣūlī’s *Ash‘ār awlād al-khulafā’ wa-akhbāruhum* from the compilations I examined, because the section on Abū al-‘Ibar is derived from the *Aghānī*, as the manuscript is not complete, according to the editor. See: al-Ṣūlī, *Ash‘ār awlād al-khulafā’ wa-akhbāruhum* ed. James Heyworth-Dunne (Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Ṣāwī, 1936), e-g [preface by Heyworth-Dunne] and 323–331. Other compilations mention his buffoonery and absurd behaviour: Ibn al-Mu‘tazz, *Ṭabaqāt*, 340–343; al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, vl.6, 185–186; Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, vl.17, 122–127; al-Kutubī, Muḥammad b. Shākir, *Fawāt al-wafayāt wa-l-dhayl ‘alayhā*, ed. Iḥsān ‘Abbās (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1974), vl.3, 285–287; al-Ṣafādī, *al-Wāfi bi-l-wafayāt*, ed. Aḥmad al-Arnā’ūt and Turkī Muṣṭafā (Beirut: Dār Ihya’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 2000), vl.2, 31. The light-hearted theme (*hazl*) as an indispensable element is well acknowledged by al-Iṣfahānī in his preface: *al-Aghānī*, vl.1, 15.

⁴⁴² Although differing in detail, Ibn al-Nadīm agrees with al-Iṣfahānī that Abū al-‘Ibar was killed by a Kūfan Shī‘ī. See: Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 169–170; Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, vl.17, 126.

⁴⁴³ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.15, 110.

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, vl.15, 111.

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, vl.15, 111–115.

Abū al-Ṭufayl, as found in other collections.⁴⁴⁶ Hence, al-Iṣfahānī's editorial hand in this case is not perceptible, as the article is short and his selection of material does not reveal much. While the subject's partisanship for 'Alī is highlighted, other sources also refer to this component.

4.3.3. Ḥassān b. Thābit

The article about Ḥassān b. Thābit (d. 54/674) comprises two main parts: his biography and the account of the Battle of Badr, to which reference is also made in the biographical part.⁴⁴⁷ The account of Badr in the *Aghānī* is based on al-Ṭabarī's accounts and differs only insignificantly from his *Tārīkh*.⁴⁴⁸ Furthermore, the account has little to do with Ḥassān; therefore, we will focus on the biographical part.

The article comprises the following components: first, Ḥassān's genealogy;⁴⁴⁹ second, his age and poetic status;⁴⁵⁰ third, the Prophet's invocation of and permission for him to lampoon the infidels and boast (*mufākhara*) with the delegates of the Banū Tamīm;⁴⁵¹ fourth, his interaction with other Companions, including his involvement

⁴⁴⁶ Although al-Iṣfahānī does not elaborate much on his Companionship (and, there is probably not much to say on this point), he agrees with other compilers on his long life and on the fact that Abū al-Ṭufayl saw the Prophet during the farewell pilgrimage (*ḥijjat al-wadā'*): Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, vl.6, 550–551; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Ma'ārif*, ed. Tharwat 'Ukāsha, 4th ed. (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, ND), 341–342; Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *al-Istī'āb fī asmā' al-aṣḥāb* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 2006), vl.1, 480; Ibn al-Athīr, *Uṣd al-ghāba fī ma'rifat al-ṣaḥāba*, ed. Alī M. Mu'awwid and 'Ādil A. 'Abd al-Mawjūd (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1996), vl.3, 143. His narration of *tafsīr*-material and his elegy for his son are mentioned: al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vl.1, 75, 227, 231, 268, 276; vl.6, 325; *idem*, *Jāmi' al-bayān 'an ta'wīl āy al-qur'ān*, ed. 'Abdallāh b. 'Abd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī (Cairo: Dār Hajar, 2001), vl.13, 669–673; vl.21, 479–485. The encounter with Mu'āwiya: Ibn 'Asākir, *Tārīkh*, vl.26, 113–134. Most of the reports in the *Aghānī* have their counterparts in Ibn 'Asākir's work, which, although late, has earlier sources, according to the *sanads*.

⁴⁴⁷ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.4, 137, the Battle of Badr occupies: 139–168.

⁴⁴⁸ Kilpatrick, *Making*, 153–155.

⁴⁴⁹ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.4, 113–114.

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, vl.4, 114–115.

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*, vl.4, 115–126.

in the accusation against ‘Ā’isha (*ifk*) and the occasions in which he composed the poetry;⁴⁵² fifth, the accounts concerning his cowardice and his encounter with al-A‘shā.⁴⁵³ The article itself does not mention Ḥassān’s involvement in the first *fitna*, of which we know from the article on Ka‘b b. Mālīk: he was an ‘Uthmānī partisan and in alignment with Mu‘āwiya, who rewarded him with 1,000 dinars.⁴⁵⁴ Despite his subject’s ‘Uthmānī sympathy, it appears that al-Iṣfahānī was not following a sectarian agenda in his rendering of the article. Even if a sectarian agenda was at work, it is impossible to discern it, based on the overall contents of the article and al-Iṣfahānī’s selection of the material.

There is nothing negative covered in the article, except for Ḥassān’s cowardice. However, his cowardice is widely mentioned in other compilations, specifically in the Sunnī scholarship.⁴⁵⁵ Thus, this sort of report cannot be viewed as defamatory, especially if we consider a report which al-Iṣfahānī attaches to the main account of his cowardice: Ḥassān’s brachial artery (*akḥal*; the artery in the middle of an arm) was cut and thus he was not able to fight with a sword.⁴⁵⁶ This report provides an excuse for Ḥassān’s absence from the battlefields.

The key themes addressed by al-Iṣfahānī are Ḥassān as the poet of Islam⁴⁵⁷ and the

⁴⁵² *Ibid.*, vl.4, 126–134.

⁴⁵³ *Ibid.*, vl.4, 134–138.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, vl.16, 176–177.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibn Qutayba, *al-Shi‘r*, 305; Abū Nu‘aym al-Iṣfahānī, *Ma‘rifat al-ṣaḥāba*, ed. ‘Ādil b. Yūsuf al-‘Azāzī (Riyadh: Dār al-Waṭan li-l-Nashr, 1998), 845; Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, vl.4, 322; Ibn al-Athīr, *Uṣd*, vl.2, 8–9; Ibn Hajar, *al-Iṣāba fī tamyīz al-ṣaḥāba*, ed. ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Abd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī and ‘Abd al-Sind H. Yamāma (Cairo: Markaz Hajar li-l-Buḥūth wa-l-Dirāsāt al-‘Arabiyya wa-l-Islāmiyya, 2008), vl.2, 527. The only exception is that Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr refrains from mentioning the details about his cowardice and tries to discredit these accounts: *al-Istī‘āb*, vl.1, 208.

⁴⁵⁶ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.4, 135.

⁴⁵⁷ Reference is made to Ḥassān’s life in the Jāhilī period at the end of the article: *ibid.*, vl.4, 136–137; in a separate section, al-Iṣfahānī relates his association with the Ghassānid king, Jabala b. al-Ayham:

sanctioning of his poetry by the Prophet. Hence, we have a prolonged section that deals with these issues: the Holy Spirit (*rūḥ al-qudus*), or Gabriel, helped Ḥassān when he lampooned the infidels and his poetry was more effective than the arrows, according to the Prophet.⁴⁵⁸ It is important for a book of songs — and the lyrics of the songs were derived from the poetry — to show the legality and the permissibility of the poetry, which, though less controversial than music, was not always unconditionally accepted in scholarly circles.⁴⁵⁹ This might explain a possible redaction on the part of al-Iṣfahānī, who does not include a comment of al-Aṣmaʿī: “Poetry gains strength for the evil purpose and becomes weak for the good; thus, Ḥassān was the virile poet (*fahl*) in the Jāhilī era, but he lost his strength in the Islamic period.”⁴⁶⁰ Al-Aṣmaʿī appears thrice as al-Iṣfahānī’s source in the article on Ḥassān, but al-Iṣfahānī was perhaps not convinced by this critique.⁴⁶¹ Instead, al-Iṣfahānī quotes Abū ‘Ubayda’s comment: “The best poetry of the settled (*ahl al-madar*) comes from the people of Yathrib and the best poet among them is Ḥassān b. Thābit.”⁴⁶² The notion behind this redaction can be explicated by al-Iṣfahānī’s own view on the criticism of poetry, which disagrees with that of al-Aṣmaʿī. In the context of the overall article, which allocates a considerable portion to the Prophet’s sanction, al-Iṣfahānī seems to focus on the compatibility of the poetry with the values of Islam, which, in return, illustrates the poetry’s legality.

Ibid., vl.15, 117–127,

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, vl.4, 115–126.

⁴⁵⁹ The sanction of the Prophet, which is reiterated in the *Aghānī*, is acknowledged in scholarly circles: al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, ed. Abū Ṣuhayb al-Karamī (Riyadh: Bayt al-Afkār al-Dawliyya, 1998), 618 (3212, 3213); Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. Naẓār M. al-Fāriyābī (Riyadh: Dār Tayba, 2005), 1162 (2485, 2486). On the objection to and the approval of the poetry in the Prophetic *ḥadīth*, see: Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* (Riyadh: Bayt al-Afkār al-Dawliyya, ND), 541–542 (5009–5016). Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal’s view on the poetry: *ahl al-qaṣāʾid bidʿa lā yajālasūn*, see: Abū Bakr al-Khallāl, *Kitāb al-Amr bi-l-maʿrūf wa-l-nahy ʿan al-munkar*, ed. Mashhūr Ḥ.M. Salmān and Hishām b. Ismāʿīl al-Saqā (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-Islāmiyya, 1990), 96.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibn Qutayba, *al-Shiʿr*, 305; Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *al-Istīʿāb*, vl.1, 207; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd*, vl.2, 8.

⁴⁶¹ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.4, 117, twice in 127.

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*, vl.4, 115.

In summary, an examination of the editorial rendering by al-Iṣfahānī in the article about Ḥassān does not reveal the imprint of a particular sectarian vision. Apart from the accounts of his cowardice, it seems that few reports in circulation present Ḥassān in a negative light.⁴⁶³ In other words, even if al-Iṣfahānī intended to present this subject negatively, the material he had to hand did not offer much possibility for doing so. On the other hand, the overarching themes of the article suggest that the main focus is on the poetry and its legality, which no doubt deserves special attention in a book of songs. Furthermore, in the article *per se*, there is no hint concerning Ḥassān's attitude towards 'Alī. Thus, it can be suggested that this theme was not al-Iṣfahānī's primary concern in this article. Rather, it is Ḥassān as the poet of Islam that wins the compiler's attention.

4.3.4. Marwān Senior

The article on Marwān b. Abī Ḥafṣa (hereafter Marwān Senior, 105–182/723–798) comprises two parts: his *nasab* and his biography. The genealogical section deals with the origin of Āl Abī Ḥafṣa, on which al-Iṣfahānī presents a number of views.⁴⁶⁴ In this part, al-Iṣfahānī also presents some reports about the famous figures in his family.⁴⁶⁵ Then, the article moves on to Marwān's biography.

Al-Iṣfahānī begins this part with a key characteristic of Marwān Senior: his parsimony.⁴⁶⁶ Following this are the reports about his relationships with patrons,

⁴⁶³ One may compare the article in the *Aghānī* with the section on Ḥassān in Ibn Sa'd's *Ṭabaqāt*, which addresses almost every theme mentioned in the former: *Ṭabaqāt*, vl.4, 322–327.

⁴⁶⁴ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.10, 61–63.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, vl.10, 63–66.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, vl.10, 66–78.

mainly, Ma'n b. Zā'ida and the caliphs, and his career as a panegyric poet.⁴⁶⁷ Al-Iṣfahānī also gives accounts of the views of critics, such as Ibn al-A'rābī, on his poetic achievements, his poetic savvy, and the occasions giving rise to his compositions.⁴⁶⁸ Finally, al-Iṣfahānī recounts the cause of Marwān Senior's death. According to Ibn 'Ammār, from 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. Sulaymān al-Nawfalī, a man named Ṣālīḥ b. 'Aṭīyya al-Aḍjam claimed to have assassinated Marwān Senior after hearing his anti-'Alid poem: "How will the inheritance of uncles become that of the descendants of the daughters? That shall not happen!"⁴⁶⁹ That is, Marwān Senior's death is the consequence of his attack on the 'Alids.

Marwān Senior's anti-'Alid tendency is not stated explicitly in this article; rather, it is referenced in the article on 'Alī b. al-Jahm, where al-Iṣfahānī says that the two poets employ the same strategy, namely, lampooning Āl Abī Ṭālib to pander to the 'Abbāsids.⁴⁷⁰ Nonetheless, al-Iṣfahānī alludes three times to this point by the repetition of the verse mentioned above: "How will the inheritance of uncles become that of the descendants of the daughters?"⁴⁷¹ In one of these accounts, two men, infuriated by this verse, curse Marwān Senior and composed a poem as its *mu'āraḍa* (flyting).⁴⁷²

Marwān Senior's anti-'Alid inclination is confirmed by other sources,⁴⁷³ and so is his

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, vl.10, 66–79.

⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, vl.10, 70–81.

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, vl.10, 81. The verse, *annā yakūnu wa-laysā dhāka bi-kā'in li-banī al-banāt wirāthat al-a'mām*, embodies the 'Abbāsīd propaganda, transiting from the Hāshimiyya movement with the claim to the *waṣīyya* from Abū Hāshim, to the focus on the uncle of the Prophet, al-'Abbās, the forefather of the Banū 'Abbās. See: Crone, *Medieval*, 89–92; Kennedy, *The Prophet*, 124–126.

⁴⁷⁰ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.10, 175.

⁴⁷¹ *Ibid.*, vl.10, 76, 80–81.

⁴⁷² *Ibid.*, vl.10, 80–81.

⁴⁷³ Al-Marzubānī, *Mu'jam*, 374–376 (712); al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, vl.15, 182; Ibn al-Mu'tazz, *Ṭabaqāt*, 46.

genealogy.⁴⁷⁴ The unusual thing about the *Aghānī* is that it is the only source that mentions the cause of Marwān Senior's death.⁴⁷⁵ Moreover, the account in the *Aghānī* is derived from a Shī'ī *isnād*: both Ibn 'Ammār and al-Nawfalī are Shī'ī sources.⁴⁷⁶ It is impossible to judge whether the death-account given by al-Iṣfahānī is related to his sectarian agenda. Clearly, we have limited information about Marwān Senior from elsewhere, while the *Aghānī* is one of the earliest and most copious repositories of his biographical material. If the death-account is from a special, Shī'ī perspective on the issue, it may be established that al-Iṣfahānī's sectarian agenda is articulated in this case. This, nevertheless, cannot be known for sure, based on the extant sources.

To recapitulate what has been mentioned, it seems that al-Iṣfahānī's account of Marwān Senior's death may be an articulation of his Shī'ī agenda: whoever defames 'Alī must pay the price (that is, his or her life).⁴⁷⁷ However, as this account only exists in the *Aghānī*, it is not easy to interpret its implication. What al-Iṣfahānī otherwise relays about this subject does not differ from other compilers. This may imply that he was simply recounting what was in the existing corpus, without much editorial intervention.

4.3.5. Al-Nābigha al-Ja'dī

⁴⁷⁴ Al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, vl.15, 182; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Shi'r*, 763; Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 182–183; Ibn al-Mu'tazz, *Ṭabaqāt*, 42–44.

⁴⁷⁵ Al-Khaṭīb only mentions his death-date, without addressing cause of death: *Tārīkh*, vl.15, 186.

⁴⁷⁶ Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 37–38, 82; Günther, *Quellenuntersuchungen*, 151–151. Al-Nawfalī is called an Imāmī by al-Iṣfahānī: Günther, "al-Nawfalī's," 256. See above page 80 and 161.

⁴⁷⁷ A parallel to this scenario can be seen in the articles about Abū al-'Ibar, Marwān Junior, and 'Alī b. al-Jahm, but it is hard to say how much al-Iṣfahānī, as a compiler, contributed to the articulation of this notion. See page 155 and 219.

The reports about al-Nābigha al-Ja‘dī consist of a profile (his *nasab*, age, and Companionship);⁴⁷⁸ the poetry which he recited to the Prophet and which articulated his monotheistic belief before his conversion to Islam;⁴⁷⁹ the characteristics of his poetry;⁴⁸⁰ a cluster of reports that contextualise his verses;⁴⁸¹ the tribal feuds and raids to which al-Nābigha makes reference in his poetry;⁴⁸² his encounters with Ibn al-Zubayr, Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī, ‘Alī, and Mu‘āwiya;⁴⁸³ and, finally, a reference to a tribal conflict, which refers to the Basūs War.⁴⁸⁴ Perhaps due to his Companionship and to his monotheistic tendency in the pre-Islamic period, al-Nābigha is positively portrayed, especially by the Prophet’s invocation, “May God not break your mouth (*lā yafḍuḍ Allāh fāka*)”, as a result of which al-Nābigha never loses a tooth, even at the age of 100.⁴⁸⁵ While the *Aghānī* is unique in mentioning al-Nābigha’s alignment with ‘Alī during Ṣiffīn, it does not differ from other sources.⁴⁸⁶ This may suggest that the reports about al-Nābigha al-Ja‘dī had become to some extent fixed by al-Iṣfahānī’s time. Thus, there is limited room for him to present a different image of al-Nābigha.

4.3.6. Al-Nā‘ila

The article about al-Nā‘ila bint al-Farāfiṣa (alive after the death of ‘Uthmān in 35/656) comprises her genealogy;⁴⁸⁷ her marriage to ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān;⁴⁸⁸ which is

⁴⁷⁸ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.5, 5–9.

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, vl.5, 9–10.

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, vl.5, 11.

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid.*, vl.5, 11–16.

⁴⁸² *Ibid.*, vl.5, 10–22.

⁴⁸³ *Ibid.*, vl.5, 22–25.

⁴⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, vl.5, 25–26; 27–45 (Basūs).

⁴⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, vl.5, 9–10.

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, vl.5, 10, 24–25; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Shi‘r*, 289–296; Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *al-Istī‘āb*, vl.2, 305–311; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd*, vl.5, 276–278; al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *al-Āmālī*, vl.1, 263–269.

⁴⁸⁷ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.16, 251.

⁴⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, vl.16, 250, 251–252.

related to the poem behind the introductory song; her role during the siege of ‘Uthmān’s house (*yawm al-dār*); and her letter to Mu‘āwiya.⁴⁸⁹ As the death of ‘Uthmān is intrinsically related to the *fitna* and involves the sectarian schism, we will address this part in detail.

In the account of ‘Uthmān’s death, al-Iṣfahānī relates that Nā’ila’s finger (or two fingers) was (or were) cut off when she tried to protect the caliph. Amongst the assailants was Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr. The bloody clash between the mob and Nā’ila is found in other sources, despite variances in detail (such as how many times the murderer stabbed ‘Uthmān).⁴⁹⁰ Then, al-Iṣfahānī devotes a great proportion of the article to Nā’ila’s letter to Mu‘āwiya (three out of five pages). Her letter first reminds Mu‘āwiya that every Muslim ought to have helped ‘Uthmān, who was maltreated and wrongfully killed. She identifies Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr and ‘Ammār b. Yāsir as the leaders of the mob and ‘Alī as one of the instigators against the caliph. Then, she relates the details of how the mob killed the caliph and humiliated both her and the daughter of Shayba b. Rabī‘a. The account ends with the scene in which the Syrians swore not to touch their women until they had killed the murderers of ‘Uthmān.⁴⁹¹

This letter places ‘Alī in a less favourable light, as it implies ‘Alī’s alignment with the mob and his responsibility for the murder. Why does al-Iṣfahānī, as a Shī‘ī, include a report that calls ‘Alī’s innocence into question, when it seems that not

⁴⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, vl.16, 252–255.

⁴⁹⁰ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vl.4, 391–393, 562. The compilers do not mention the cut finger(s): al-Mas‘ūdī, *Murūj*, vl.2, 345; al-Ya‘qūbī, *Tārīkh al-Ya‘qūbī*, ed. ‘Abd al-Amīr Muḥannā (Beirut: Sharikat al-A‘lamī li-l-Maṭbū‘āt, 2010), vl.2, 72–74; Ibn A‘tham, *Kitāb al-Futūḥ*, ed. ‘Alī Shīrī (Beirut: Dār al-Aḍwā’, 1991), vl.2, 429; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, vl.6, 220–222; Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, vl.3, 70.

⁴⁹¹ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.16, 253–255.

many compilers mention the letter?⁴⁹² It is not easy to explain its inclusion by al-Iṣfahānī, but it might be suggested that any reference to Nā'ila inevitably links to the death of 'Uthmān. For the information about Nā'ila, al-Iṣfahānī's only source is 'Umar b. Shabba, through al-Jawharī.⁴⁹³ In other words, al-Iṣfahānī is limited to his source, 'Umar b. Shabba, and, probably for the sake of comprehensiveness, al-Iṣfahānī may have found himself obliged to include this report. As a result, he had no option but to use 'Umar b. Shabba's report, which entails him mentioning the letter.

4.3.7. Al-Nu'mān b. Bashīr

The article on al-Nu'mān b. Bashīr (d. 65/684) comprises three parts: the profile including the genealogy and an outline of his life,⁴⁹⁴ the biography,⁴⁹⁵ and a synopsis of the poets in his family.⁴⁹⁶ In the profile, al-Iṣfahānī first presents his *nasab*, then his Companionship and an outline of his career: he was an 'Uthmānī, in alignment with Mu'āwiya at the Battle of Ṣiffīn; he was of high standing at Mu'āwiya's court. During the second *fitna*, al-Nu'mān opposed Marwān's caliphate. After al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Qays had been killed and al-Nu'mān had failed to incite the people of Ḥimṣ to revolt with him, he fled and was himself killed.⁴⁹⁷ His narration of the *ḥadīth* is also noted.⁴⁹⁸ The biography comprises his political career with regard to Mu'āwiya's respect for him and his role as the representative and defender of the Anṣār, his

⁴⁹² Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi, *al-Iqd al-farīd*, ed. 'Abd al-Majīd al-Tarḥīnī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1983), vl.5, 50–51. Al-Balādhurī refers to the letter, without quoting the full text: *Ansāb*, vl.6, 221–222. It should be noted that the common source of the letter for al-Balādhurī, al-Iṣfahānī, and Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi is al-Madā'inī-Abū Mikhnaḥ.

⁴⁹³ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.16, 251–255.

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, vl.16, 24–25.

⁴⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, vl.16, 25–39.

⁴⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, vl.16, 39–42.

⁴⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, vl.16, 24.

⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, vl.16, 25.

interaction with others including the singer, ‘Azza al-Maylā, and the poet, al-‘Ashā Hamadān, and the occasions on which he composed the poetry.

By and large, the presentation of al-Nu‘mān is not negative, in spite of his alignment with Mu‘āwiya; it is similar to what other compilers present.⁴⁹⁹ It seems that the eloquence of al-Nu‘mān is missing from the *Aghānī*,⁵⁰⁰ but al-Iṣfahānī mentions his *khuṭba*, addressing the people of Kūfa, which to some extent illustrates this attribute.⁵⁰¹ In al-Ṭabarī’s *Tārīkh*, al-Nu‘mān refused to attack al-Ḥusayn and escorted the latter’s family to Syria after the massacre of Karbalā’.⁵⁰² This account is absent from the *Aghānī*, although al-Ṭabarī’s work is likely to have been at al-Iṣfahānī’s disposal. This might have been a deliberate omission on the part of al-Iṣfahānī, but to relate this account while clarifying al-Nu‘mān’s involvement in Karbalā’ would certainly disrupt the flow of the narrative in the article and would constitute a digression, as this account has little to do with the poetry and songs.

Al-Nu‘mān’s presentation seems to have been determined by al-Iṣfahānī’s sources. With the exception of some possible redaction on the part of al-Iṣfahānī, which does not seem to have been motivated by his sectarian tendency but by his concern for the genre, what is mentioned in the *Aghānī* resembles what is in the other sources. That is, the key themes about al-Nu‘mān’s life may have been fixed in al-Iṣfahānī’s repertoire of reports, which does not leave much room for his editorial intervention.

⁴⁹⁹ Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, vl.5, 363–366 ; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vl.4, 562, vl.5, 329; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-Muḥabbar*, ed. Ilse Lichtenstädter (Beirut: Dār al-Āfāq al-Jadīd, ND), 294; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīkh*, vl.62, 111–128; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 4030.

⁵⁰⁰ The report stating that al-Nu‘mān was the most eloquent person is derived from Ibn Sa‘d, but not through Ibn Abī Usāma, as it is not found in the printed edition. Thus, it is questionable whether it was in al-Iṣfahānī’s repository; see also: Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīkh*, vl.63, 123; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 4030.

⁵⁰¹ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.16, 25–26.

⁵⁰² Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vl.5, 360–362.

4.3.8. Al-Walīd b. ‘Uqba

The article about al-Walīd b. ‘Uqba (d. 61/680) is presented under the title *Dhikr bāqī khabar al-Walīd b. ‘Uqba wa-nasabih* (mentioning the rest of the reports about al-Walīd b. ‘Uqba, and his lineage). *Bāqī* (the rest) is used here probably because of the cross-reference in the article of Abū Qatīfa, where al-Iṣfahānī states that the reports about al-Walīd will come later.⁵⁰³ In accordance with this, al-Iṣfahānī does not mention the whole genealogy of al-Walīd, as it is already covered in the article on his son, Abū Qatīfa. Following brief genealogical information is the profile of al-Walīd (the summary by the compiler):

He was one of the *fiṭyān*, the brave, and one of the poets of Quraysh. He was a debauchee and, once, ‘Uthmān’s governor in Kūfa after Sa’d b. Abī Waqqāṣ. He drank wine and was accused of it (*shuhida ‘alayhi bi-dhālīka*). He [‘Uthmān] punished him and deposed him. He was the one who elegized ‘Uthmān, may God be pleased with him, and incited Mu‘āwiya to take revenge for him.”⁵⁰⁴

Al-Walīd’s profile outlines the key points characterizing the following reports: first, his relationship with ‘Uthmān, as shown in his appointment to the Kūfan governorship; second, the punishment inflicted on al-Walīd; third, his laudable and condemnable characteristics, such as bravery, generosity, and debauchery. The first two issues, *par excellence*, are historiographically important in their relevance to ‘Uthmān’s dénouement. That is, they give rise to the question of whether al-Walīd’s governorship was a result of ‘Uthmān’s nepotism and, thus, a pretext for his murder. This question is inherently related to the sectarian division.

⁵⁰³ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.1, 29.

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, vl.5, 89. The profile is followed by al-Walīd’s poem, by which he incited Mu‘āwiya to take action, omitted here by me.

It seems at first glance that al-Iṣfahānī's answer to this was provided by 'Umar b. Shabba. The narrative in the article is mainly shaped by the reports of 'Umar b. Shabba through the recension of Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Jawharī. The al-Jawharī – 'Umar b. Shabba *isnād* is ubiquitous, being found in 31 reports, taking up 73.8% of the article which contains 42 reports in total.⁵⁰⁵ The use of 'Umar b. Shabba's corpus, if viewed as being a deliberate selection by al-Iṣfahānī, does not reveal much about his opinion due to its comprehensiveness — it includes the versions presumably favoured by Sunnīs, as well as those of a more Shī'ī leaning. On the other hand, non-'Umar b. Shabba reports do not reveal much about al-Iṣfahānī's views. Nevertheless, it is clear that al-Walīd is, overall, negatively represented, although such a representation does not essentially differ from that in most of the sources prior to the *Aghānī*. We will further consider al-Iṣfahānī's presentation of al-Walīd in the broader context (comparing with the image of al-Walīd in other compilations), after we address the main components of the article.

The biography of al-Walīd tackles the following themes: the beginning of al-Walīd's governorship;⁵⁰⁶ al-Walīd's drinking habit, which causes his scandalous behaviour — being intoxicated in public during the communal prayer — leading to complaints from Kūfans and the punishment that was inflicted on him;⁵⁰⁷ the friendship between him and Abū Zubayd;⁵⁰⁸ the Qur'ānic verses and the Prophetic *ḥadīth* related to al-Walīd;⁵⁰⁹ al-Walīd's association with a sorcerer, who was later killed by Jundub b.

⁵⁰⁵ Fleischhammer, *die Quellen*, 165–166.

⁵⁰⁶ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.5, 89–91.

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, vl.5, 91–96.

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, vl.5, 96–101.

⁵⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, vl.5, 101–102.

Ka‘b or an anonymous Anṣārī;⁵¹⁰ the aftermath of al-Walīd’s dismissal as well as his death in al-Raqqā;⁵¹¹ and, finally, a few poems by al-Walīd, including the poem which became the lyrics of the introductory song.⁵¹² Amongst these themes, the drinking issue, the Qur’ānic and *ḥadīth* references, and his association with the sorcerer are worth discussing, for they are in one way or another are related to the issue of ‘Uthmān’s nepotism and al-Walīd’s vices.

On the account of al-Walīd’s drinking during his Kūfan governorship, three reports in the article suggest that ‘Uthmān punished his half-brother or ordered ‘Alī to execute the penalty.⁵¹³ The opposite view proposes either that al-Walīd attempted to escape by making use of his *qarāba* (blood ties or close relationship) to ‘Uthmān or that the latter actively rejected the complaint of the Kūfans against his half-brother.⁵¹⁴ The first version can be seen as a Sunnī version — ‘Uthmān punished al-Walīd according to the *sunna* and thus dismissed the accusation of nepotism — while the second can be seen as a more Shī‘ī version, by virtue of its expressing doubt concerning ‘Uthmān’s integrity. Both views are narrated by ‘Umar b. Shabba in the *Aghānī*.⁵¹⁵ The division between these two versions is also discernable in other compilations, with the exception of al-Balādhurī’s *Ansāb*, which, like the *Aghānī*, mentions both versions, and al-Ṭabarī’s *Tārīkh*, which presents an erratic version of the story, as we shall explain later.⁵¹⁶ Depending on the sectarian position of the compiler in question,

⁵¹⁰ *Ibid.*, vl.5, 102–104.

⁵¹¹ *Ibid.*, vl.5, 104–105.

⁵¹² *Ibid.*, vl.5, 105–110.

⁵¹³ *Ibid.*, vl.5, 92–95.

⁵¹⁴ *Ibid.*, vl.5, 91–92, 94–95.

⁵¹⁵ *Ibid.*, vl.5, 93–95.

⁵¹⁶ As a matter of fact, al-Balādhurī’s portrayal of al-Walīd and ‘Uthmān’s partiality is more critical than that of al-Iṣfahānī, which by and large depends on ‘Umar b. Shabba: al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, vl.6, 138–145.

either of the two may be selected. The pro-‘Uthmān report, which states that ‘Uthmān ordered ‘Alī to flog al-Walīd and that ‘Alī had al-Walīd lashed forty times, following the *sunna* and the practice of the first two caliphs,⁵¹⁷ is widely accepted by the major Sunnī sources, such as the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*.⁵¹⁸ On the other hand, the works by the compilers known for their Shī‘ī tendency note ‘Uthmān’s partiality and accredit ‘Alī’s determination to penalize al-Walīd regardless of his relationship to the caliph.⁵¹⁹ However, al-Iṣfahānī’s source, ‘Umar b. Shabba, who mentions both versions of the story, does not seem to favour either of the two and it is thus not clear whether he takes a certain stance here.

If al-Iṣfahānī’s inclusion of the opposite perspectives on ‘Uthmān’s reaction to the accusation against al-Walīd fails to inform us of his agenda, the overall negative narrative concerning al-Walīd b. ‘Uqba does not help, either. Beside his drinking issue, the part on the *ḥadīth* and the Qur’ānic verses, to which al-Walīd is related, further emphasises the subject’s vice. When al-Walīd boasts of his eloquence, prowess, and strength to ‘Alī, the Qur’ānic verse was revealed: “Is then the man who believes no better than the man who is rebellious and wicked? Not equal are they (32:18).”⁵²⁰ A Qur’ānic verse was revealed to warn the Prophet: “O ye who believe! If a wicked person comes to you with any news, ascertain the truth, lest ye harm people unwittingly, and, afterwards, become full of repentance for what ye have done

⁵¹⁷ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.5, 95.

⁵¹⁸ Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *al-Istī‘āb*, vl.2, 335; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 815, (1707); al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 705–706, (3696); 733–734, (3872); Ibn Qutayba, *al-Ma‘ārif*, 319; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd*, vl.5, 421–422; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, ed. Muḥammad ‘A. ‘Aṭā (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2008), vl.1, 390, (1196), 401–402, (1243); al-Zubayrī, *Nasab*, 138–139; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, vl.6, 143, 146; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīkh*, vl.63, 245.

⁵¹⁹ Al-Mas‘ūdī, *Murūj*, vl.2, 263–264; al-Ya‘qūbī, *Tārīkh*, vl.2, 59.

⁵²⁰ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.5, 101.

(49:6).”⁵²¹ The wicked in this verse refers to al-Walīd, who was sent by the Prophet to collect the *ṣadaqa* from the Banū Muṣṭaliq, but he returned and told the Prophet that they had apostatized. The Prophet ordered Khālīd b. al-Walīd to confirm al-Walīd’s report and found it to be a lie.

As for the *ḥadīth*, it is related that the wife of al-Walīd came to the Prophet complaining of al-Walīd’s abusive beating. The Prophet said: “Tell him that I already gave you my protection.” Yet, the prophetic protection did not have any effect. The wife kept coming back to the Prophet with the same complaint. In the end, the Prophet made the invocation: “My Lord! You must punish al-Walīd; he committed sin against me.”⁵²² With all these reports juxtaposed together, al-Iṣfahānī appears to have left the subject in a negative light. However, all these divine confirmations of al-Walīd’s evil nature are approved by the Sunnī compilers.⁵²³ That is, these negative reports do not closely relate al-Iṣfahānī’s selection to his agenda, as the negative reports are extant in other sources.

A similar conclusion can be deduced from an examination of al-Iṣfahānī’s treatment of al-Walīd’s association with the sorcerer: a sorcerer performed magic to entertain al-Walīd. When Jundub knew this, he killed the sorcerer. He was detained for a while and then released. This account is followed by a few reports that illustrate how al-Walīd punished Jundub, or the guard who oversaw Jundub, but then set him free

⁵²¹ *Ibid.*

⁵²² *Ibid.*

⁵²³ Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘*, vl.18, 624–625; vl.21, 348–353; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīkh*, vl.63, 227–235; Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, vl.6, 37; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Ma‘ārif*, 319; Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *al-Istī‘āb*, vl.2, 333; ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *Tafsīr al-qur‘ān*, ed. Muṣṭafā M. Muḥammad (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Rushd, 1989), vl.2, 231; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vl.1, 420, (1317, 1318); vl.7, 513–514, (18956); al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, vl.6, 145.

for his piety and how pious Jundub was, with the Prophetic endorsement.⁵²⁴ The account presents al-Walīd negatively, as it underscores his impiety and his alignment with the heretic against the righteous Muslim adherent to the law of God. This kind of account, however, is not absent from Sunnī sources.⁵²⁵ In other words, al-Iṣfahānī may have deliberately chosen those negative reports about al-Walīd, but it must be taken into account that there is simply nothing positive about him in the repository of reports, apart from al-Ṭabarī's naïve version of the account of al-Walīd's dismissal.

Amongst the sources which may have been available to al-Iṣfahānī but not used in the article on al-Walīd is al-Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh*. Al-Ṭabarī's account of al-Walīd derives from Sayf b. 'Umar, to whom al-Iṣfahānī has access mostly via al-Ṭabarī.⁵²⁶ Yet Sayf b. 'Umar's narration, as aforementioned, is rather unusual: al-Walīd never drank and always behaved generously and respectfully, but some Kūfans, out of personal grudges and perversity, fabricated the accusation and raised it with 'Uthmān.⁵²⁷ Sayf's version may have been left out by al-Iṣfahānī on account of its favouritism towards al-Walīd, but it is also rejected by Sunnī scholars, such as Ibn 'Abd al-Barr.⁵²⁸ As a matter of fact, the sources prior to the *Aghānī* do not bother to acknowledge al-Walīd's moral defects, including al-Ṭabarī himself in his *Tafsīr*.⁵²⁹ Thus, even if al-Iṣfahānī does exclude the Ṭabarī-Sayf narration here, it means little in terms of sectarian articulation.

⁵²⁴ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.5, 102–104.

⁵²⁵ Ibn Qutayba, *al-Ma'ārif*, 402; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, vl.6, 141; Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, vl.8, 243–244.

⁵²⁶ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, "Sayf b. 'Umar", see indices.

⁵²⁷ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vl.4, 271–281.

⁵²⁸ Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *al-Istī'āb*, vl.2, 333; Ibn 'Abd al-Barr is cited by both Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd*, vl.5, 422 and Ibn Hajar, *al-Iṣāba*, vl.11, 343. Moreover, none of the sources before the al-Ṭabarī mentions Sayf b. 'Umar's report.

⁵²⁹ See footnote 523.

In summary, al-Walīd's moral defects are widely attested in the early sources and his good moral standing far from unquestionable, since his wickedness (*fisq*) is firmly established in the Holy Qur'ān.⁵³⁰ This explains the awkwardness that can be discerned in the works of Sunnī scholars.⁵³¹ For instance, Ibn 'Abd al-Barr attempts to account for the episode with the Banū Muṣṭaliq: "it was a misunderstanding by al-Walīd, who, out of fright, took the group there for his reception to be apostates and hence made the wrong report to the Prophet."⁵³² This apologetic tone, however, is never sensed in the works prior to Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, especially when Ibn Qutayba explicitly calls al-Walīd "the liar (*kādhīb*)".⁵³³

The negative portrayal of al-Walīd in the *Aghānī* may be explained by his pro-'Uthmān tendency — not only through being his half-brother but also through his incitement of Mu'āwiya to take revenge for the murdered caliph.⁵³⁴ There is little doubt that al-Walīd is by no means a paragon of a Muslim governor, but it is worth asking to what extent the creation of such an image is rendered by al-Iṣfahānī. As the majority of information in circulation does not favour al-Walīd in any sense, this means that al-Iṣfahānī had limited options to hand if he is to construct a positive version of al-Walīd. Except for al-Ṭabarī, who uses Sayf b. 'Umar extensively for the

⁵³⁰ See footnote 523.

⁵³¹ Al-Walīd's qualification as a Companion and his narration of the Prophetic traditions were debatable, as the collective probity of the Companions was put forward only in the ninth century. For a *ḥadīth* scholar, before the view of the collective probity (*'adāla*) of the Companions became the consensus of Sunnī Islam, it was possible to question a Companion's Companionship based on his or her deeds. For instance, Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Qaṭṭān (d. 1024-1025) believed that al-Walīd b. 'Uqba should not be considered a Companion because of his evil deed. See: Scott C. Lucas, *Constructive Critics, Ḥadīth Literature, and the Articulation of Sunni Islam: The Legacy of the Generation of Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Ḥanbal* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 255-85. As for al-Qaṭṭān's view, see: F. Jabali, *The Companions of the Prophet: a Study of Geographical Distribution of Political Alignments* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 77.

⁵³² Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *al-Istī'āb*, vl.2, 333.

⁵³³ Ibn Qutayba, *al-Ma'ārif*, 319.

⁵³⁴ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.5, 89, 108–109.

accounts of al-Walīd's governorship, what al-Iṣfahānī presents does not significantly differ from Sunnī compilers prior to him, such as Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Qutayba, and al-Balādhurī. Moreover, the *Aghānī*, perhaps in order to quote al-Walīd's poetry, does include some positive things about al-Walīd, as compared to other works. Or, at least, the *Aghānī* includes a few reports to illustrate his generosity.⁵³⁵

In a nutshell, al-Walīd b. 'Uqba is not presented as a virtuous Companion in most works prior to the *Aghānī*. The article therein seems to conform to the existing views about al-Walīd and includes what may be seen as Shī'ī and Sunnī discourse. As a result, it is hard to say whether investigation of al-Iṣfahānī's selection reveals his sectarian agenda in this case, although the negative presentation of al-Walīd certainly matches al-Iṣfahānī's agenda as a Shī'ī.

Summary

To conclude our analyses of the eight articles above, we have some evidence of al-Iṣfahānī's editorial activity. In Ḥassān b. Thābit's case, his emphasis on the legitimacy of the poetry shows his concern for the genre and its readership, as we have addressed in section one (4.1). However, there is little indication of al-Iṣfahānī's sectarian agenda at work. The selection of a Shī'ī source for the death of Marwān Senior and the absence of some reports in the biography of al-Nu'mān may be connected to al-Iṣfahānī's Shī'ī tendency, but there are other factors that could explain away al-Iṣfahānī's editorial decisions, such as his policy of avoiding digression and his concern for genre. In the case of al-Walīd b. 'Uqba, the fact that

⁵³⁵ *Ibid.*, vl.5, 97–101, 109–110.

al-Walīd is negatively presented may have something to do with al-Iṣfahānī's sectarian perspective. As al-Walīd is an 'Uthmānī inciting Mu'āwiya against 'Alī, it seems reasonable that al-Iṣfahānī, as a Shī'ī, highlights the subject's negative sides. However, redaction criticism does not work well in this case, because al-Iṣfahānī's treatment is not essentially different from that in the sources in circulation. Overall, these articles seem to conform to the prevalent views on these subjects. Whether al-Iṣfahānī found the existing reports agreeable or not (the letter of al-Na'ila may have posed an awkward moment, assuming that the only matter about which he cares is the articulation of his sectarian perspective), it is clear that he had to work within the common pool of information, which determined the extent to which he could manipulate the source material as a compiler.

4.4. A Prejudiced Book of Songs: the Case of Ibn al-Mu'tazz

Just as concern for patron and readership and the availability of source material determine al-Iṣfahānī's editorial work, his own preference also influences his treatment of the subjects in the *Aghānī*. If al-Iṣfahānī's sectarian perspective were the only message he is trying to convey, then the enemies of the Shī'īs would have been negatively portrayed or excluded. However, this is not always the case. Besides being limited by the availability of the information, al-Iṣfahānī, as a poet and littérateur, has his literary tastes and favourites, which may override his attempt to articulate a sectarian perspective, as illustrated in the article on Ibn al-Mu'tazz (247–296/862–909), who is presented positively in the *Aghānī*, despite his anti-Shī'ī poetry.

This article is divided into three sections: the profile, the songs composed by Ibn al-Mu‘tazz,⁵³⁶ and the reports about him.⁵³⁷ The report section focuses on Ibn al-Mu‘tazz’s princely life, with emphasis on his poetic output: it addresses the occasions on which he composed the poetry and illustrates his spontaneity and poetic gift. This sort of report should be viewed as complimentary in the context of a poet’s biography. That is, overall, the reports present the subject positively. In what follows, we will first consider Ibn al-Mu‘tazz as an anti-Shī‘ī and then focus on the profile, which clearly reveals how al-Iṣfahānī evaluates this figure.

It is questionable whether Ibn al-Mu‘tazz was an anti-Shī‘ī, given the ambivalent accounts from both Ibn al-Mu‘tazz himself and the biographic sources. On one hand, we have early statements from al-Ṣūlī dismissing the view that Ibn al-Mu‘tazz was hostile to Shī‘īs as an accusation by his enemies.⁵³⁸ Al-Ṣūlī’s apologia for Ibn al-Mu‘tazz may have been motivated by their friendship, but it can be buttressed by Ibn al-Mu‘tazz’s remark in his *Ṭabaqāt*, in which he curses the Nāṣibī, Marwān Junior.⁵³⁹ However, apart from these two references, the early sources do not mention Ibn al-Mu‘tazz’s sectarian leaning.⁵⁴⁰ In contrast, his poetry does reveal an assertion of the ‘Abbāsids’ legitimacy and their superiority over the Ṭālibids. As well as the typical

⁵³⁶ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.10, 230–232.

⁵³⁷ *Ibid.*, vl.10, 232–236.

⁵³⁸ According to al-Ṣūlī, *Ash‘ār awlād*, 107–108: Ibn al-Mu‘tazz disagreed with the view of the ‘Āmma (*mukhālīfan al-ra’y al-‘āmma*, presumably, the Sunnī view), but he never vilified any of the Companions of the Prophet. In some of his poetry, he boasted on behalf of the Banū ‘Abbās against the Ṭālibids, because he thought some Ṭālibīs were challenging him in a *munāqada* (poetic contest or flying). These poems were wrongly interpreted by Ibn al-Mu‘tazz’s enemies. As a result, Ibn al-Mu‘tazz regretted what he had said, composed the apologetic poetry, and swore to compose nothing but panegyrics for ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib for the rest of his life.

⁵³⁹ Ibn al-Mu‘tazz, *Ṭabaqāt*, 393.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 129–130; al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, vl.11, 302–308. The first compilation identifying him with Hanafism only came in the thirteenth century: based on a poem, Ibn Khallikān judges that Ibn al-Mu‘tazz was a Hanafī. It is doubtful whether this poem, which portrays morning drinking (*ṣabūḥ*), can truly be read as evidence of the latter’s Hanafī tendency as Ibn Khallikān claims: *Wafayāt*, vl.3, 79.

counter-ʿAlid argument that the Banū ʿAmm are more eligible than the Banū Bint,⁵⁴¹ Ibn al-Muʿtazz also emphasises the fact that the ʿAbbāsids toppled the Umayyads as one of the sources of their legitimacy and that the caliphate was divinely ordained to the Banū ʿAbbās, as al-Riḍā (the eighth Twelver Shīʿī imam), although designated to succeed after al-Maʾmūn, died before his succession.⁵⁴² The propagandistic poetry may have been a result of Ibn al-Muʿtazz’s political ambitions, which are subject to debate,⁵⁴³ and does not, of course, necessarily reflect a personal conviction. Although the discrepancy in the sources can be reconciled, what concerns us here is how al-Iṣfahānī understands Ibn al-Muʿtazz’s sectarian tendency. To gain further insights, we have to take the profile into account.

The profile in this article is extraordinarily long, occupying three pages. In it, al-Iṣfahānī highly praises Ibn al-Muʿtazz’s merits and points out his poetic style:

Having lived shortly before our time, Ibn al-Muʿtazz enjoys far-reaching fame for his merits and cultural achievements, which are largely recognized by all classes of society. As for his poetry, if it at times betrays princely subtlety (*riqqat al-mulūkiyya*), a refined approach to love, and the limpid style of the contemporaries (*halhat al-muḥdathīn*), it also contains much in the manner of the best poets which in no way falls short of earlier achievements [...] If he makes many fine poems, some mediocre, and a few bad ones, his achievements should not be thoroughly disavowed and all his work judged as inferior because its faults have been broadcast and its virtues concealed [...] But one should only retain the best of something and disregard what one cannot approve of, for it is not a basis for forming an opinion. Some people, however, have

⁵⁴¹ Al-Kutubī, *Fawāt*, vl.2, 224–228; al-Kutubī (d. 764/1363) is the only biographer who mentions Ibn al-Muʿtazz’s anti-Shīʿī inclination: “He was a Sunnī by conviction and deviant from the ʿAlids (*sunnī al-ʿaqīda munḥarīfan ʿan al-ʿAlawiyīn*).” Al-Kutubī lists a few poems to illustrate his “deviance” from the ʿAlids, but one of them, *fa-antum banū bintihi dūnanā*, cannot be found in the *dīwān* of Ibn al-Muʿtazz.

⁵⁴² Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Dīwān Ibn al-Muʿtazz* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, ND), 23–24, 30–33, 395.

⁵⁴³ Different views on Ibn al-Muʿtazz’s political involvement: Julia Bray, “Ibn al-Muʿtazz and Politics: The Question of the *Fuṣūl Qiṣār*,” *Oriens* 38 (2010): 107–143.

sought to raise their status, enhance their poor reputation, and improve their base lot by attacking and slandering men of merit. But they have only debased themselves further while the objects of their attack have had their standing enhanced. Ibn al-Mu‘tazz, for instance, was killed in the most horrible fashion and left no descendants to defend his name and hold it high. Yet, because of his writings and poetry, his general excellence, the good reports about his life, and his familiarity with every branch of learning, his reputation only improves. Consider how his opponents launch ever fiercer attacks on him, while boasting of their own achievements and those of their predecessors who denigrated him as they do, yet they only appear more ineffectual and insignificant. And the more they vaunt their own verses and general culture, the more boring and loathsome they become. When a capable critic sets upon them, they turn from condemning Ibn al-Mu‘tazz’s literary record to spreading evil reports about his religious practice and his lampooning the descendants of Abū Ṭālib, although they were themselves the first to launch attacks on the Ṭālibids in al-Muktafi’s presence, until he ordered them to desist. And so they have accused Ibn al-Mu‘tazz of this very offence instead of themselves, and committed even worse misdeeds, as I shall mention in some detail after the information about Ibn al-Mu‘tazz, God willing.⁵⁴⁴

The accusation, according to al-Iṣfahānī, originated from the enemies of Ibn al-Mu‘tazz, who tried in vain to find fault with his poetry and thus turned to attack his belief. Here, al-Iṣfahānī does not deny that Ibn al-Mu‘tazz lampooned the ‘Alids, but emphasises that his enemies were those who started the defamation of Āl Abī Ṭālib. Although Ibn al-Mu‘tazz, with al-Iṣfahānī’s acknowledgement, did lampoon the descendants of Abū Ṭālib, this does not lead al-Iṣfahānī to present him negatively. On the contrary, al-Iṣfahānī vigorously defends Ibn al-Mu‘tazz against the derogatory critiques of his opponents. While admitting to the stylistic difference from the Jāhilī poets, al-Iṣfahānī highly evaluates Ibn al-Mu‘tazz’s “refined approach to love and the limpid style of the Moderns”. Moreover, al-Iṣfahānī further justifies Ibn al-Mu‘tazz’s

⁵⁴⁴ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.10, 228–229. Al-Iṣfahānī did not, however, mention any further details about the slanders by Ibn al-Mu‘tazz’s opponents. Here, I follow Kilpatrick’s translation (*Making*, 83–84; in endnote 179, Kilpatrick also notes al-Iṣfahānī’s unfulfilled promise), but the transliterations in the brackets and the ellipses (for the omission) are my own.

misdeed against Āl Abī Ṭālib by the proposition that “one should only retain the best of something and disregard what one cannot approve of, for it is not a basis for forming an opinion.” In other words, although Ibn al-Mu‘tazz lampooned the Ṭālibids, this should not, in al-Iṣfahānī’s view, undermine his merit and achievement. Why does al-Iṣfahānī apologise here for Ibn al-Mu‘tazz? The rationale behind this favouritism is that al-Iṣfahānī was a fan of this poet and one-day caliph. Ibn al-Mu‘tazz is an important source of songs and his works, including *Ṭabaqāt*, are adduced by al-Iṣfahānī in the *Aghānī*.⁵⁴⁵ Further, al-Iṣfahānī explicitly shows his appreciation for Ibn al-Mu‘tazz in the profile quoted above.

Therefore, although Ibn al-Mu‘tazz can be counted amongst the enemies of ‘Alī and his party, his hostility does not outweigh al-Iṣfahānī’s appreciation for him as a poet and a man of letters. Al-Iṣfahānī admires Ibn al-Mu‘tazz to the extent that the latter’s merit can abrogate his lampoons against the Ṭālibids. Aside from the positive reports, which illustrate the subject’s poetic gift, al-Iṣfahānī saves no effort in apologising for him in his lengthy profile.

Conclusion

This chapter presents a part of the results derived from our application of redaction criticism to the articles about the Shī‘īs and the anti-Shī‘īs in the *Aghānī*. Our analyses produce five conclusions regarding al-Iṣfahānī’s editorial role and agendas, which no doubt include the articulation of his Shī‘ī vision. The articles that reveal the Shī‘ī agenda are deferred to the next chapter, while this chapter elucidates the other

⁵⁴⁵ Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 73–74, 110–111.

four conclusions, through analyses of sixteen biographies.

First, genre and readership constitute one of al-Iṣfahānī's editorial concerns in his work. This concern is self-evident in most of the *Aghānī*, which repeatedly relays the scene of the *majālis*, in which poetry is recited and music performed. Moreover, al-Iṣfahānī clearly shows his consideration for the readership of his work in the preface; that is, he has to keep the balance between the material that attracts and entertains his patron and readers and the less light-hearted material. In the case of al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī's article, it seems that the former prevails in this see-saw battle. Although the subject of the article is al-Ḥusayn — the martyr in Shī'ī collective memory — who composed the poem behind the introductory song, the majority of the article is devoted to his daughter, Sukayna bint al-Ḥusayn. The main themes contained in Sukayna's reports are hardly related to any Shī'ī issue. A similar observation can be made about the article on Ḥassān b. Thābit, in which al-Iṣfahānī accentuates the permissibility of the poetry, which asserts the legality of the genre, as well as, to some extent, the legitimacy of reading and compiling a book of songs. These observations suggest that al-Iṣfahānī's concern for his readership may overrule the articulation of his sectarian perspective.

Second, the utility of redaction criticism is qualified by the source material available to us. Thus, in some cases, al-Iṣfahānī's editorial activity remains in obscurity, while, in others, uncertainty hinders us from firm conclusions. When the sources are few (when the *Aghānī* is the only source or when the reports in question exist in terse form in other compilations), when textual problems exist, as in the case of Marwān Junior, or when the reports in an article are uninformative (being too few or lacking

any repetitive element), then our knowledge of al-Iṣfahānī's redaction is limited. Although some cases do seem to reveal a sectarian agenda (specifically, an attempt to reconcile the historical conflicts between the Banū Hāshim and the Banū Umayya, as in the article about al-ʿAblī), we are not able to find solid ground to interpret the text in connection with al-Iṣfahānī's editorial involvement on the basis of redaction criticism.

Third, our understanding of al-Iṣfahānī's editorial activity is subject to the availability of the sources. A reconstruction of the information in circulation allows us to know what kind of material al-Iṣfahānī had with which he might work. The eight articles, which are examined in section three (4.3), show that al-Iṣfahānī's presentations of the subjects do not differ from those by other compilers, except for the account of Marwān Senior's death, which seems quite likely to have been a special selection on part of al-Iṣfahānī, although we cannot know for sure. It has to be stressed, however, that it is not possible to know how al-Iṣfahānī regarded the corpus at his disposal without his own comments. What is known with certainty is that he cannot reshape the narrative at will without using sources and, in the above examples, he aligns himself with most of his sources.

Finally, personal prejudice is not absent from the *Aghānī*. In the musical part of the work, al-Iṣfahānī apparently favours Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī in many respects.⁵⁴⁶ Hence, it is not surprising to encounter his favouritism towards other persons, poet or musician. This point is clearly discernable in the article on Ibn al-Muʿtazz, who is highly praised by al-Iṣfahānī in the profile, despite his anti-ʿAlid poetry, which

⁵⁴⁶ See footnote 364.

al-Iṣfahānī himself was not able to deny. Not only does his poetry win al-Iṣfahānī's plaudits, but his contribution to the music is also recognized, as shown in al-Iṣfahānī's use of his works, including *Ṭabaqāt*. Thus, at least in this case, al-Iṣfahānī's own preference abrogates his sectarian tendency.

Except for the second point, which reminds us of the limitations of redaction criticism, these conclusions show that al-Iṣfahānī had more than one agenda in mind while going about his task of compilation. Limited by the availability of information, al-Iṣfahānī may not always be consistent in his editorial principles or agendas. Likewise, as the *Aghānī* is loaded with different expectations, the readership with his patron, the genre, and al-Iṣfahānī's literary tastes all stake a claim in the making of this book of songs.

Chapter Five: A Shī'ī Agenda at Work

This chapter presents the articles where al-Iṣfahānī's Shī'ī agenda in the *Aghānī* can be discerned through redaction criticism. The results of the analyses are divided on the basis of the ways in which redaction criticism can reveal al-Iṣfahānī's sectarian view. That is, instead of listing and analyzing each of the biographies examined by this thesis, the present chapter is structured in order to illustrate four points.

First, there are cases that facilitate an investigation of the compiler's selection of material, because the sources available to us allow the reconstruction of a pool of reports from which al-Iṣfahānī selected. By examining al-Iṣfahānī's selection from this pool, it can be suggested that he deliberately chose certain reports which either magnify the moral flaws of 'Alī's enemies or emphasise 'Alī's virtues. Although the motivation behind al-Iṣfahānī's inclusion and exclusion of reports is open to varying interpretations (as it is nearly impossible to know with certainty what was in al-Iṣfahānī's study and notebooks), when all the instances of this kind are put together, a general trend in his treatment of material indicates a sectarian agenda.

Second, the use of special and rare sources implies a Shī'ī agenda on the part of the compiler. There are two kinds of special sources: first, the transmitter whose material is related to a particular theme, such as Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Sa'īd b. 'Uqda, whose narrations in the *Aghānī* are mostly related to the *aḥādīth* of *ahl al-bayt*; second, the reports whose sources are deemed problematic by al-Iṣfahānī.⁵⁴⁷ Rare

⁵⁴⁷ A classical example of problematic informant is Ibn Khurdādhbih, who has been severely criticized by al-Iṣfahānī at numerous occasions in the *Aghānī*. See: Kilpatrick, *Making*, 44; al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.1, 43–44; vl.5, 112; vl.6, 127, 137; vl.8, 183; vl.9, 209, 229; vl.11, 247; vl.15, 23–24, 103;

sources denote the direct informants (the first narrators in the *sanads*), who only very rarely appear in the *Aghānī*. The use of rare sources that are hardly adduced by al-Iṣfahānī indicates an attempt to articulate a point that is not found in the sources he frequently consults.

Third, emphasis through repetition highlights three themes: the degradation of the enemies of the Shīʿīs, love for ʿAlī, and the salvation promised for his partisans. The use of these recurrent elements can be shown to be more than accidental, because of the frequency of repetition and al-Iṣfahānī's reliance on special and rare sources.

Fourth, editorial remarks indicate al-Iṣfahānī's Shīʿī perspective. Apart from the occasional comments interpolated in the reports, the comments of al-Iṣfahānī and what he states in the profiles of his subjects are useful, because of their synoptic nature, which shows the most important themes in al-Iṣfahānī's view.⁵⁴⁸

Altogether, these four sections will demonstrate the presence of al-Iṣfahānī's sectarian sympathy within the *Aghānī*. Before we move to the first section, it should be noted that some biographies are used to illustrate more than one point mentioned above. This is because the source material (either the articles in the *Aghānī* itself or the reports in circulation), which intrinsically influences our application of redaction criticism, differs in each case. Thus, some biographies supply us with a number of approaches to al-Iṣfahānī's editorial interventions while others do not. In order to avoid confusion, the list of the biographees that are analysed here is given below,

vl.18, 260; Sallūm, *Dirāsāt*, 49, 66.

⁵⁴⁸ The utility of the profiles, see: Kilpatrick, "Abū al-Faraġ's," 94–128.

with notes on the identities of the persons in question (Shī'ī or anti-Shī'ī) and the volume/page where al-Iṣfahānī gives his label to the subject.

Subject	Location (vl/page)	Reason for Inclusion
Abū al-Aswad al-Du'alī (d. 69/688)	12/238	A Shī'ī (<i>min wujūh shī'at 'Alī</i>)
Abū Sufyān (d.31/652) ⁵⁴⁹	6/262	The forefather of the Umayyads
'Alī b. al-Jahm (d.249/863)	10/175	An 'Abbāsī poet hostile to 'Al Abī Ṭālib (<i>kāna yanḥū naḥw Marwān b. Abī Ḥaḥṣa fī hijā' 'Al Abī Ṭālib...</i>)
Di'bal (d. circa 246/860)	20/94–95	A pro-'Alī and <i>ahl al-bayt</i> poet (<i>min al-shī'a al-mashhūrīn bi-l-mayl ilā 'Alī</i>)
Ka'b b. Mālik (d. 50/670)	16/172	An 'Uthmānī Companion, in alignment with Mu'āwiya during the first <i>fitna</i> (<i>Kāna... 'Uthmāniyyan</i>)
Khālid al-Qasrī (66–126/686–746)	22/8	An Umayyad governor of Iraq, who imposed harsh measures against the Shī'īs (<i>...yal'anuhu 'alā al-minbar</i>)
Al-Kumayt (60–126/680–744)	17/5	A Shī'ī poet (<i>kāna ma'rūfan bi-l-tashayyu'</i>)
Al-Mughīra b. Shu'ba (d. 50/670)	16/98–99	The governor of Iraq for Mu'āwiya after the first <i>fitna</i> , who complied with the caliph's order to vilify 'Alī
Al-Muhājir b. Khālid (d. 37/657)	16/148	A partisan of 'Alī' during Ṣiffīn (<i>kāna ma'a 'Alī bi-Ṣiffīn</i>)
Al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī (105–183/723–789)	7/181–182	A Kaysānī poet

Table 5. Articles Examined in Chapter Five

Ten subjects are examined through redaction criticism and, when an article is mentioned for the first time, a brief description of its structure and key components are given. Despite the inevitably repetitive references, this structural schema has merit, in that it highlights the utility of redaction criticism and focuses the examples on the overarching argument: al-Iṣfahānī to some extent shapes the *Aghānī* in accordance with his sectarian perspective. With this editorial decision borne in mind,

⁵⁴⁹ Abū Sufyān, who was a Companion but died before the first *fitna*, does not meet the criteria for including an article in this thesis. However, this article is included here. The rationale behind this exception is that he is a figurehead of the Banū Umayya in the historiography and contention over their political legitimacy inevitably involves him. For example, when al-Jāhīz boosts the dynastic legitimacy of the 'Abbāsids against the Umayyad partisans, the hypocrisy of Abū Sufyān is discussed: Charles Pellat, *The Life and Works of Jāhīz: Translations of Selected Texts*, trans. D.M. Hawke (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), 61.

we now turn to the first section.

5.1. Al-Iṣfahānī's Selection of Material

This section presents the findings derived from the following articles: Abū Sufyān, Khālīd al-Qasrī, and al-Mughīra b. Shu'ba. Following alphabetical order, we will start with al-Iṣfahānī's selection of material in the article about Abū Sufyān.

5.1.1. Abū Sufyān

The article begins with Abū Sufyān's genealogy and references to the death of his father, Ḥarb.⁵⁵⁰ Then, it comes to his profile:

Abū Sufyān was one of the leaders of Quraysh in the Jāhili era, one of the heads of parties against the Prophet in his life [the Prophet], the cave (*kahf*) of the hypocrites in his time. He converted on the day of Faṭḥ [of Mecca]. There are reports about his conversion, which we will mention here. He used to sponsor the merchants with Quraysh's money and his own in order to trade in the land of foreigners. He witnessed with the Prophet the conquest [of Mecca] and lost an eye in the battle of al-Ṭā'if. He remained one-eyed till the battle of al-Yarmūk, when he lost the other and became blind henceforth.⁵⁵¹

The article then proceeds to the first four reports, each of which takes up fewer than six lines. Abū Sufyān, in these reports, is respected by the Prophet; for example, Abū Sufyān is described by the Prophet as the best — *kull al-ṣayd fī jawf al-farā* (all the prey are in the belly of wild ass; an idiom referring to the best of a thing).⁵⁵²

⁵⁵⁰ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.6, 262–264.

⁵⁵¹ *Ibid.*, vl.6, 264.

⁵⁵² *Ibid.*, vl.6, 264–265. Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī, *Kitāb Jamharat al-amthāl*, ed. Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Salām (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1988), vl.2, 135–136.

Following this is a long report about the encounter between Abu Sufyān and Heraclius.⁵⁵³ Heraclius asks Abū Sufyān a few questions and tells the latter's companions to refute him, should he lie. Abū Sufyān knew that none of his companions would refute him, but he did not want them to think him a liar. The dialogue illustrates Abū Sufyān's refusal to lie at the expense of his honour. The result of this encounter is that Heraclius ascertained the prophethood of Muḥammad and expressed his wish to follow him.⁵⁵⁴ Next, al-Iṣfahānī relates the story of the trip taken by Abū Sufyān and al-ʿAbbās to Yemen, where they meet a rabbi, at the time when Muḥammad began his mission.⁵⁵⁵ The rabbi asked Abū Sufyān and then al-ʿAbbās about the Prophet and then confirmed Muḥammad's prophethood. However, in this report, Abū Sufyān falsely claims to be an uncle of the Prophet and implicitly disgraces the latter. Then, al-ʿAbbās, enraged by Abū Sufyān's slander, goes to the rabbi and says that he is the real uncle. After talking to al-ʿAbbās, who answers the rabbi's questions honestly, the rabbi ascertains that Muḥammad is the Prophet. This report marks a contrast with the previous one, as, here, Abū Sufyān is less honourable. Then, the account of the conversion of Abū Sufyān on the eve of Fath follows, as al-Iṣfahānī promises at the beginning of the article.⁵⁵⁶

After this is a cluster of reports about Abū Sufyān as a Muslim, which we will address in detail later; the key feature of these reports is his hypocrisy (*nifāq*).⁵⁵⁷ The

⁵⁵³ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.6, 265–268.

⁵⁵⁴ This report continues with the letter from the Prophet to Heraclius, in which the latter is invited to convert. Heraclius tries to persuade bishops to convert, but this leads to a riot. Thus, he has to call off the plan. This report is also widely cited, partially or entirely, see: al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 22–24 (7), 33–34 (51), 510 (2681), 541 (2804), 571 (2978), 609 (3174), 1160 (5980), 1374 (7196), 1440 (7541); Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, 553 (5136); al-Ṭabarī, *al-Tārīkh*, vl.2, 646–651; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, vl.23, 421–431.

⁵⁵⁵ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.6, 268–270.

⁵⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, vl.6, 270–272.

⁵⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, vl.6, 272–273.

end of the article deals with the occasion where Abū Sufyān composed his verses, which form the lyrics of one of The Hundred Songs; that is, the Battle of al-Sawīq, which happened after the Battle of Badr. The cause of this battle was that Abū Sufyān swore neither to wash his head nor drink wine unless he had raided the Prophet and his followers. He went with a number of tribesmen, but they did nothing. Thus, Quraysh mocked him: “You went out to drink *Sawīq* (a drink made out of wheat and barley).”⁵⁵⁸ Then, Abū Sufyān’s date of death is given before a report that makes a digression on Salām b. Mishkam, who hosted Abū Sufyān during the Battle of al-Sawīq.⁵⁵⁹

Judging from the overall article, Abū Sufyān is not very positively presented. There are reports regarding the Prophet’s respect for him. Yet, a contrast is noticeable: while Abū Sufyān refused to lie for the sake of honour in front of Heraclius, he is not so honest with the Yemeni rabbi. His conversion took place in a rush, mostly as a result of al-‘Abbās’ instigation. Following these long reports is a cluster of accounts emphasizing his hypocrisy, which further illustrates his ingratitude for the favour of the Prophet in the beginning. In the end, the Battle of al-Sawīq leaves an impression of Abū Sufyān’s cowardice and his inability to fulfil his vow — which, again, echoes his dishonesty and lack of honour shown in the previous reports. The negative portrayal of Abū Sufyān in the *Aghānī* can be further corroborated when we look at the compiler’s selection of reports. There are reports presenting Abū Sufyān in a positive light. Although it is very likely that they were available to al-Iṣfahānī, they are not included in the article.

⁵⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, vl.6, 273–274.

⁵⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, vl.6, 275–276.

When al-Iṣfahānī addresses Abū Sufyān as a Muslim, the reports that he includes share a common characteristic — Abū Sufyān’s hypocrisy (*nifāq*). He looked forward to the defeat of the Muslim army on the day of al-Yarmūk, he advised ‘Uthmān to restore Jāhilī kingship and the status of the Banū Umayya, and he despised the fact that Abū Bakr became the caliph.⁵⁶⁰ At the end of this cluster of reports, al-Iṣfahānī remarks: “This kind of report for Abū Sufyān is numerous. It would be redundant to mention them all and what we mention here is sufficient.” This comment indicates a selection process on al-Iṣfahānī’s part. Furthermore, whether or not there is more material, as al-Iṣfahānī claims, the effect of this remark suggests that this kind of account, which leaves the sincerity of his conversion in question, is copious. However, al-Iṣfahānī’s editorial work screens out not only redundant material but also the positive reports about Abū Sufyān.

As previously mentioned, a part of Ibn Sa’d’s *Ṭabaqāt* may have been available to al-Iṣfahānī, probably in written form.⁵⁶¹ Ibn Sa’d narrates three kinds of positive reports about Abū Sufyān. The first kind illustrates Abū Sufyān’s repentance and sincere belief in Muḥammad’s prophethood after his initial hypocrisy. The key scenario in this category is that Abū Sufyān felt disdain for Muḥammad without pronouncing it, but his malicious intention was perceived by the Prophet. With this evidence of theurgic knowledge, Abū Sufyān either acknowledged that Muḥammad was truly a prophet or repented of his deed.⁵⁶² The second kind includes only one report, relating Abū Bakr’s defence of Abū Sufyān. After hearing the malicious remarks by Salmān, Bilāl, and Ṣuhayb about Abū Sufyān, Abū Bakr refuted them:

⁵⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, vl.6, 272–273.

⁵⁶¹ See Appendix Four and 3.1.

⁵⁶² Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, vl.6, 10.

“You say this to the *shaykh* of Quraysh and its *sayyid*.”⁵⁶³ This account is rather favourable to Abū Sufyān when contrasted with a cluster of reports underscoring his declining status after the appearance of Islam — usually in a scene where Abū Sufyān is taunted or punished by ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb or Abū Bakr.⁵⁶⁴ The third kind of report emphasises Abū Sufyān’s devotion to *jihād* at the Battle of al-Yarmūk, where no voice can be heard but his invocation, such as “O victory of God! Come near!”⁵⁶⁵

None of these positive accounts on Ibn Sa‘d’s authority are present in the *Aghānī*. Furthermore, the third kind of report presents a clear contrast to the *nifāq* accounts, where Abū Sufyān looked forward to the Muslim defeat, as illustrated by the narrator’s comment: “May God fight him! He refused anything but hypocrisy.”⁵⁶⁶ The exclusion of these positive accounts, as found in the *Ṭabaqāt*, was very likely deliberate on al-Iṣfahānī’s part, and a similar conclusion can be established when we take the corpus of al-Zubayr b. Bakkār into account.

Al-Zubayr’s own work, *Jamharat nasab Quraysh*, as we have it, does not have an entry on Abū Sufyān, due to the fragmentary state of its manuscripts.⁵⁶⁷ However, we can collect al-Zubayr’s corpus from other compilations which quote from him: Ibn ‘Asākir’s *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq* and Ibn Ḥajar’s *Iṣāba*. In addition, *Nasab Quraysh*, the work of his uncle, al-Muṣ‘ab b. ‘Abdallāh al-Zubayrī, is consulted here, because al-Iṣfahānī transmits from al-Muṣ‘ab, mainly via al-Zubayr and Ishāq

⁵⁶³ *Ibid.*, vl.6, 11.

⁵⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, vl.6, 12-13. See also: Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīkh*, vl.23, 468.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, vl.6, 11–12.

⁵⁶⁶ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.6, 272.

⁵⁶⁷ Al-Jarākh, introduction to *Jamharat*, by al-Zubayr b. Bakkār, vl.1, 31–35.

b. Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī, both found extensively in the *Aghānī*.⁵⁶⁸ That is, al-Muṣ‘ab’s narrations might have been in his nephew’s pool of information and in that of al-Iṣfahānī.

Although the *Jamharat* is incomplete, it includes a positive report: when Abū Sufyān lost an eye at the conquest of al-Ṭā’if, the Prophet promised him Paradise as the reward for his devotion to the cause of God (*fī sabīl Allāh*).⁵⁶⁹ Another narration illustrating Abū Sufyān’s merits on al-Muṣ‘ab’s authority is similar to the third kind of report found in the *Ṭabaqāt*, namely, one about Abū Sufyān’s voice on the day of al-Yarmūk.⁵⁷⁰ Like the account about the lost eye at al-Ṭā’if, it elucidates his devotion to *jihād*. Finally, a report narrated by al-Zubayr relates that, when the Prophet was performing the *ifāḍa* (the circumambulation around the Ka‘ba, one of the rituals during the pilgrimage), Abū Sufyān and al-Ḥārith b. Hishām stood on his right and left sides while Mu‘āwiya and Yazīd, the sons of Abū Sufyān, stood in front of him.⁵⁷¹ This report underscores the standing of Abū Sufyān and his sons in the Prophet’s mind. All these reports present Abū Sufyān in a positive light, but none makes its way into the *Aghānī*.

Given the extraordinary number of quotations by al-Iṣfahānī from al-Zubayr b. Bakkār, it would be far-fetched to assume that the aforementioned reports were beyond his reach. Adding to this the absence of Ibn Sa‘d’s accounts, deliberate

⁵⁶⁸ See Chapter Three; Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 80–81, 89–91. For a relevant discussion, see: Majied J. Robinson, “Prosopographical Approaches to the *Nasab* Tradition: a Study of Marriage and Concubinage in the Tribe of Muḥammad, 500–750 CE” (PhD diss., University of Edinburgh, 2014), 86–87.

⁵⁶⁹ Al-Zubayr, *Jamharat*, vl.2, 255; Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Iṣāba*, vl.5, 230; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīkh*, vl.23, 465.

⁵⁷⁰ Al-Zubayrī, *Nasab*, 122.

⁵⁷¹ Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīkh*, vl.23, 462–463. A similar account is narrated by al-Madā’inī: al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, vl.5, 14.

selection by the compiler can be confidently asserted.⁵⁷² Al-Iṣfahānī's selection of material, in this case, can be explained on the grounds of his sectarian tendency — as a Shī'ī, he portrays the father of 'Alī's opponent, Mu'āwiya, as a hypocrite as a means to undermine the Sufyānid Umayyad legitimacy. This does not have to be the only explanation for al-Iṣfahānī's redaction. Nevertheless, if a number of the analyses lead to the conclusion that al-Iṣfahānī selectively presents the enemies of 'Alī and his party in a negative light, this means that he did indeed manipulate the material in accordance with his sectarian perspective. This is what the following cases seem to suggest.

5.1.2. Khālīd b. 'Abdallāh al-Qasrī

The article about Khālīd contains an unusually long profile, filling five pages in the printed edition, which specifies Khālīd's genealogy and offers some details about his forefathers.⁵⁷³ The details of the profile will be deferred to sections three and four (5.3 and 5.4), where we will discuss the repetitive elements and the compiler's comments in relation to his sectarian agenda.⁵⁷⁴ For our discussion of al-Iṣfahānī's selection here, we look at the key components of the biography.

After providing the details about Khālīd's lineage and forefathers, al-Iṣfahānī states,

⁵⁷² The reports mentioned by al-Balādhurī also contain positive references: al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, vl.5, 13–16. Although al-Balādhurī appears in the *Aghānī* as a source and his *kitāb* is referred to once by al-Iṣfahānī, we do not know whether the material in the *Ansāb* was ever available to him. That said, the existence of the positive accounts in the *Ansāb* implies their wide circulation in the milieu to which al-Iṣfahānī was close or directly connected; for the socio-political context of al-Balādhurī, see: I-Wen Su, "Representations of the Marwanids in the *Ansāb al-ashraf* and the Reception of Its Audience in the Ninth-Century Cultural Milieu" (M.A. Diss., University of Edinburgh, 2013), 8–25. Hence, this further corroborates the idea of an omission on the part of al-Iṣfahānī.

⁵⁷³ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.22, 5–9.

⁵⁷⁴ See 5.3.1.2 and 5.4.1.

at the end of the profile: “Khālid, growing up in Medina, used to act in a womanly fashion (*yatakhannathu*) in his youth, following the singers and the transvestites. He was associated with ‘Umar b. Abī Rabī‘a and acted as the messenger between him and his girlfriends.”⁵⁷⁵ Starting with Khālid’s libertine youth, the article proper is suffused with Khālid’s vices. Except for the first and last reports, which focus on his relations with ‘Umar b. Abī Rabī‘a,⁵⁷⁶ the rest of the reports emphasise his evil deeds and spiteful statements, such as his contempt for the Zamzam well, his appointment of Christians (*Naṣārā*) and Magians (*Mājūs*) to rule over Muslims, his godless manner, and his preference for the caliph over the Prophet, as well as his vilification of ‘Alī.⁵⁷⁷ The negative presentation of Khālid in the *Aghānī* is explicit and this is achieved via al-Iṣfahānī’s selection of material.

In terms of selection, al-Iṣfahānī seems to completely overlook any positive reports about Khālid. One of al-Iṣfahānī’s direct informants, al-Yazīdī, relates that Khālid used to prohibit music.⁵⁷⁸ Then a singer came to him with his lute to make an appeal by means of his performance — a typical motif one expects to find in the *Aghānī*.⁵⁷⁹ Yet, this report is not found in this article of the *Aghānī*, possibly as a result of the compiler’s exclusion of the material, as it presents the subject somewhat positively.

Another theme missing from the *Aghānī* is Khālid’s generosity. Numerous reports endorsing Khālid’s generosity existed. These reports were not necessarily disseminated by al-Iṣfahānī’s sources, but their *isnāds* indicate the prevalence of this

⁵⁷⁵ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.22, 9.

⁵⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, vl.22, 9–12, 23–25.

⁵⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, vl.22, 12–23.

⁵⁷⁸ Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 54–55.

⁵⁷⁹ The report is found in: Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīkh*, vl.16, 143–144. On the common themes in the *Aghānī*, see: Kilpatrick, *Making*, 251–254.

kind of material. Many of Khālid's *khutbas*, which confirm his generosity, are recounted by al-Aṣma'ī, to whose narrations al-Iṣfahānī had access.⁵⁸⁰ A reference to his generosity is made in a narration by al-Zubayr b. Bakkār, one of al-Iṣfahānī's most frequently quoted sources; he mentions that Khālid used to reward any Qurashī who visited him in Kūfa.⁵⁸¹ Furthermore, it seems unlikely that al-Iṣfahānī was ignorant of Khālid's reputed generosity, as he refers to it in the profile,⁵⁸² but elaborates on this point only once, and then in a rather negative way: Khālid inherited his deceptive nature from his family and surpassed all in terms of this characteristic; nonetheless, his generosity and eminent genealogy disguised this.⁵⁸³ Thus, it appears that al-Iṣfahānī chose to neglect positive reports, notwithstanding their availability and prevalence.

Another merit of Khālid, his eloquence, is well attested in other compilations. A number of reports, narrated by al-Aṣma'ī, portray Khālid's ability to improvise a brilliant speech.⁵⁸⁴ Al-Iṣfahānī may not have had access to the reports about Khālid's eloquence because his intermediary informants, from whom al-Iṣfahānī accesses the narrations of al-Aṣma'ī, chose not to say anything positively about Khālid. Nonetheless, al-Jāhiz's *Bayān*, which was certainly at al-Iṣfahānī's disposal, also mentions an account that makes reference to this.⁵⁸⁵ Considering the number of reports illustrating Khālid's eloquence, it is unlikely that this kind of report entirely

⁵⁸⁰ The reports about Khālid's generosity and other virtues are found in: Ibn 'Asākir, *Tārīkh*, vl.16, 138–159; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, vl.2, 227–228; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, vl.9, 90–92. For al-Iṣfahānī's quotation from al-Aṣma'ī, see: Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 74–75.

⁵⁸¹ Al-Zubayr b. Bakkār, *Jamharat*, vl.1, 531–532. See also 3.1.

⁵⁸² Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.22, 6.

⁵⁸³ *Ibid.*, vl.22, 14.

⁵⁸⁴ Ibn 'Asākir, *Tārīkh*, vl.16, 138, 141–142; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, vl.9, 59–60.

⁵⁸⁵ Al-Jāhiz, *al-Bayān*, vl.1, 195. Al-Iṣfahānī mentions *al-Bayān wa-l-tabyīn* by al-Jāhiz once, see: Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 116–117.

escaped al-Iṣfahānī's notice. However, this element is absent from the *Aghānī*. Instead, al-Iṣfahānī informs us that, once, Khālīd forgot the Qur'ānic verses during a *khuṭba*. When he ordered his friend, Abū Zamzam, to open the Qur'ān and turn to a certain sura, Abū Zamzam comforted Khālīd: "O Emir, relax and do not let that scare you, as I have never seen an intelligent man memorizing the Qur'ān. Rather, the stupid men memorize it." Khālīd concurred: "You told the truth. May God have mercy on you."⁵⁸⁶ This report marks how al-Iṣfahānī remembers this personage differently from his source, al-Ṭabarī, who mentions that Khālīd was moved by the beautiful Qur'ānic recitation of a Khārijī to the extent that he almost refrained from executing him.⁵⁸⁷ Likewise, when al-Iṣfahānī mentions that Khālīd, the most cowardly of men, was shocked and confused by news of the revolt by the heretic, al-Mughīra b. Sa'īd, he seems to have missed the fact that it was Khālīd al-Qasrī who executed al-Mughīra b. Sa'īd and his followers; more accurately, he burnt them alive.⁵⁸⁸ Why did al-Iṣfahānī, with at least part of al-Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh* at his disposal, fail to mention the reports about Khālīd's encounters with the Khārijī and al-Mughīra b. Sa'īd? It is possible that al-Ṭabarī's accounts never came to al-Iṣfahānī's attention, when the latter was collecting reports about Khālīd. Nonetheless, judging from the overall presentation of the article and the points where al-Iṣfahānī's selection is

⁵⁸⁶ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.22, 22.

⁵⁸⁷ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vl.7, 134. Al-Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh* was very likely at al-Iṣfahānī's disposal; see Appendix Four and 3.1.

⁵⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, vl.7, 128–129; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, vl.9, 76. Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.22, 14. Marsham suggests that the accounts of the killing of al-Mughīra are often odd and ambivalent and the execution by burning people alive could be controversial and not necessarily positive; see: Andrew Marsham, "Attitudes to the use of fire in executions in late antiquity and early Islam: the burning of heretics and rebels in late Umayyad Iraq," in *Violence in Islamic Thought: From the Qur'an to the Mongols*, ed. Robert Gleave and István Kristo-Nagy (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 106–127. Yet al-Ṭabarī's report on Khālīd's execution of al-Mughīra does not seem to be concerned with the legality of burning human alive; rather, the focus is on the heretical deeds of al-Mughīra, namely, his claim to return the dead to life and his sorcery. I argue that al-Ṭabarī's accounts were available to al-Iṣfahānī, but the latter deliberately omits the fact that Khālīd did take action against the heretics because he tried to highlight Khālīd's cowardice. Thus, in the *Aghānī*, we know of al-Mughīra's activity and Khālīd's failure to react to it immediately, but the outcome of the event is missing.

involved, it appears that al-Iṣfahānī includes only negative accounts here, in all probability because Khālīd, who blasphemed ‘Alī, deserves this treatment.

5.1.3. Al-Mughīra b. Shu‘ba

This article begins with a summary of al-Mughīra’s genealogy, his slyness and prudence, his status as a Prophetic Companion, his participation in the conquests during the caliphates of Abū Bakr and ‘Umar, and his governorships in the garrisons, including Kūfa and Baṣra.⁵⁸⁹ The key issues that the article addresses include his conversion to Islam, his shrewdness and cunning, his obsession with marriage (he married and divorced more than eighty women), an accusation of adultery, and his advice for ‘Alī.⁵⁹⁰

The *Aghānī* agrees with other compilations on the remarkable number of the marriages that he consummated, although the number given differs.⁵⁹¹ His slyness is also widely recognized.⁵⁹² However, the *Aghānī* presents a very different picture on certain issues. In what follows, we examine his conversion, his advice for ‘Alī, and the accusation of adultery with regard to al-Iṣfahānī’s selection of material.

For the account of his conversion, al-Iṣfahānī quotes directly via Ibn Sa‘d from al-

⁵⁸⁹ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.16, 60–61.

⁵⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, vl.16, 63–66; the adultery issue, see page 198.

⁵⁹¹ Ibn Sa‘d’s report states that he had married more than a hundred women; see: *Ṭabaqāt*, vl.5, 178. Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr’s report suggests, however, a number of more than three hundred; see: *al-Istī‘āb*, vl.2, 260; al-Balādhurī and Ibn Qutayba both agree on the number eighty, as given in the *Aghānī*; see: al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, vl.13, 345–346; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Ma‘ārif*, 295. Another anonymous report claims more than a thousand: Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd*, vl.5, 238.

⁵⁹² Ibn Ḥabīb, *al-Muḥabbar*, 184; Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *al-Istī‘āb*, vl.2, 259–260. Ibn Ḥajar quotes from al-Sha‘bī and Ibn Sa‘d; see: Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Iṣāba*, vl.10, 301.

Wāqidī, without any other intermediary.⁵⁹³ This report portrays al-Mughīra's conversion as an opportunistic decision. He had treacherously killed a group of his tribesmen and then sought refuge through conversion. This report has its verbatim counterpart in the *Ṭabaqāt*, both coming from al-Wāqidī.⁵⁹⁴ In terms of selection, it seems that al-Iṣfahānī would have had access to Ibn Ishāq's account through al-Ṭabarī, which gives a more concise account without mentioning his motivation, which is to some extent less negative, when compared with al-Wāqidī's account.⁵⁹⁵

As for his advice to 'Alī after 'Uthmān's murder, there exist a few versions, all of which agree that al-Mughīra suggested to 'Alī that he should first acknowledge Mu'āwiya's governorship in Syria and then depose him when the time was ripe, but that 'Alī refused. Some accounts hold that al-Mughīra left after 'Alī's refusal.⁵⁹⁶ Others mention that al-Mughīra returned to 'Alī the next day, affirming 'Alī's view on Mu'āwiya. Then, al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī or Ibn 'Abbās came up with the judgment that the first piece of advice from al-Mughīra was genuine while the second was insincere.⁵⁹⁷ Al-Ṭabarī, who is one of al-Iṣfahānī's sources, tells us that Ibn 'Abbās was the man who understood al-Mughīra's intentions and suggested that 'Alī accept the first advice.⁵⁹⁸ Instead of quoting al-Ṭabarī's account, al-Iṣfahānī chose the narration of al-Madā'inī from Abū Mikhnaḥ, which holds that, when al-Mughīra returned to 'Alī with his second piece of advice, 'Alī was able to recognize al-

⁵⁹³ Al-Iṣfahānī usually quotes the *Ṭabaqāt* material from Ibn Sa'd through the *sanad*, al-Khaḥḥāf-Ibn Abī Usāma, but, in this article, no intermediary is mentioned; this may suggest that a written form of the *Ṭabaqāt* was available to al-Iṣfahānī; see: Chapter Three; Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 198. The absence of the intermediaries is verified with reference to Mss. Fe1562 (see Appendix Two).

⁵⁹⁴ Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, vl.5, 173–175.

⁵⁹⁵ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vl.2, 626–627. Similar narration, see: al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, vl.13, 343–344.

⁵⁹⁶ Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-Futūḥ*, vl.2, 446–447; al-Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh*, vl.2, 77.

⁵⁹⁷ Al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī appears in: Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *al-Istī'āb*, vl.2, 260, while Ibn 'Abbās appears in: al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj*, vl.2, 354–356.

⁵⁹⁸ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vl.4, 439–440.

Mughīra's ill intention, without any aid from al-Ḥasan or Ibn 'Abbās. He told al-Mughīra: "What you want is not hidden from me. You advised me the first time, but deceived me the last. Yet I shall not come to terms with a thing which I find corrupts my religion in pursuit of the benefits of this life."⁵⁹⁹ Likewise, in his account of al-Mughīra's conversion, al-Iṣfahānī again did not choose to quote al-Ṭabarī, in spite of his work's availability. His preference is explicable, as al-Madā'inī's report more emphasises 'Alī's piety and *'ilm*.

Like the previous accounts of al-Mughīra's advice for 'Alī and his conversion, which imply that al-Iṣfahānī is attempting to present the subject in less positive light, his treatment of al-Mughīra's adultery clearly illustrates al-Mughīra's moral flaws and, to some extent, implies a criticism of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb's judgment. Al-Iṣfahānī quotes the reports of 'Umar b. Shabba, who relies on a number of informants. Altogether, the corpus of 'Umar b. Shabba presents the following narrative (the summary below is my own):

Al-Mughīra had an affair with the female neighbour of Abū Bukra. One day, Abū Bukra, with a company including Nāfi', Ziyād, and Shibl, sat in the room opposite that of his female neighbour. The wind blew ajar the door of her house. The men looked inside and saw al-Mughīra copulating with her. They watched, ascertained what they saw, and then wrote to 'Umar to report this affair. 'Umar summoned al-Mughīra back to Medina. When al-Mughīra arrived at Medina, the plaintiffs testified against him. First, Abū Bukra was asked whether he saw him penetrate like a *kohl* stick passes into a *kohl* container. He answered in the affirmative. So did the

⁵⁹⁹ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.16, 69.

other two witnesses, namely, Nāfi' and Shibl. Upon this, 'Alī told al-Mughīra: "You are hopeless (*idhhab 'anka*⁶⁰⁰), Mughīra! You lost three fourths of yours." Worried about the outcome of the accusation, al-Mughīra cried to the Emigrants (*muhājirūn*) and to the wives of the Prophet. They all were sympathetic towards al-Mughīra and thus refused to sit with the plaintiffs. 'Umar was distraught by the case, too. Then, the last witness, Ziyād, was summoned. When 'Umar saw [Ziyād] coming forth, he said: "Verily, I saw a man through whose tongue God will not disgrace one of the Emigrants." 'Umar sat with him while surrounded by the heads of the Helpers (*anṣār*) and Emigrants. Al-Mughīra came up and said: "I have a word to tell the people." He approached Ziyād and told him: "Do not hide the perfume after the groom (*lā makhba' li-'itr ba'da 'arūs*; this is a proverb used when something is urgently needed⁶⁰¹). O Ziyād! Remember God and the position of the Final Judgment. God, His Book, His Messenger, and the Commander of the Faithful already forbade my blood to spill (*haqanū damī*), unless you go beyond to [claim] what you did not think that you saw (*illā an tatajāwaz ilā mā lam tara mā ra'ayta*). Do not let the ugly scene you saw carry you to claim what you did not see. By God, if you were between my loin and hers, you would not have seen where my penis was." So Ziyād's eyes became disturbed and face red. He said: "I do not consider right what people believe right, but I saw an ugly scene, I heard fast gasping as well as panting and I saw him on her with his face down." 'Umar asked: "Did you see him penetrate like a *kohl* stick passes into a *kohl* container?" Ziyād answered: "No." Invalidating Abū Bukra's accusation, 'Umar exclaimed, "God the greatest!", and

⁶⁰⁰ I would like to thank Professor H. Jeng for kindly suggesting the translation of this phrase.

⁶⁰¹ Abū Hilāl al-'Askarī, *Kitāb Jamharat*, vl.2, 307–308. The meaning of the phrase is not entirely clear here, as al-Ḍabbī gives an origin of the saying without explaining its usage: al-Mufaḍḍal al-Ḍabbī, *al-Fākhir fī al-amthāl*, ed. Muḥammad 'Uthmān (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2011), 212–213.

ordered the first three witnesses to be flogged. After the penalty, Abū Bukra insisted: “I testify that al-Mughīra must have done such and such.” ‘Umar intended to lash him, but ‘Alī stopped him: “If you punish him, then stone your man [namely, al-Mughīra].” What ‘Alī means here is that, if Abū Bukra were to be beaten twice, his testimony would be doubled [and thus, the requirement for four witnesses would be fulfilled]. In that case, the accusation would be established and al-Mughīra would then have to be stoned. Then, ‘Umar asked Abū Bukra to repent but the latter refused, as such repentance is required to authorize one’s testimony and Abū Bukra swore not to testify again in this life. After this lengthy cluster of adultery accounts, two reports follow. The first shows that ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, aware of al-Mughīra’s wrongful deed and his partiality in his judgment, said: “By God, I did not think that Abū Bukra was lying about you. Every time I see you, I am afraid of being stoned by the stones from Heaven.”⁶⁰² The second report, not from ‘Umar b. Shabba, relates that ‘Alī said that, if al-Mughīra did not stop it [the adultery], he would have him stoned.⁶⁰³

‘Umar b. Shabba’s reports about the adultery, as quoted by al-Iṣfahānī, are noteworthy, as they do not give rise to any poem or song, except for a lampoon of Ḥassān b. Thābit.⁶⁰⁴ ‘Umar b. Shabba’s reports are not only lengthy — five pages long in a seventeen-page article — but also repetitive, because he uses different sources and their accounts sometimes overlap with one another.⁶⁰⁵ Moreover, most of the compilations only allude to this accusation without any detail.⁶⁰⁶ Where al-

⁶⁰² Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.16, 71–75.

⁶⁰³ *Ibid.*, vl.16, 75.

⁶⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰⁵ For instance, in the text of the *Aghānī*, Ziyād testifies twice, and al-Mughīra is reprimanded by Abū Bukra twice, when he visited the adulteress, see: *ibid.*, vl.16, 71, 73–74.

⁶⁰⁶ Khalīfa b. Khayyāt, *Tārīkh*, ed. Akram Ḍ. al-‘Amrī, 2nd ed. (Riyadh: Dār Ṭayba, 1985), 135; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd*, vl.5, 239; Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *al-Istī‘āb*, vl.2, 260.

Mughīra’s adultery is acknowledged, as in the case of al-Balādhurī’s works, ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb is absolved of any partiality, because the fourth witness, Ziyād, withdrew from testifying without being put under the kind of pressure described in the *Aghānī* — as an accusation requires four witnesses to be validated, ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb released al-Mughīra in accordance with the *Sharī‘a*.⁶⁰⁷

Furthermore, as Ibn Sa’d is directly quoted several times in the article, it is justifiable to ask why al-Iṣfahānī does not use Ibn Sa’d’s narration, which comprises only four lines. Alternatively, al-Iṣfahānī could have chosen what al-Ṭabarī relates. Al-Ṭabarī’s account relates the accusation against al-Mughīra to some personal grudge between the plaintiffs and al-Mughīra. Although the account admits the fornication, it also emphasises that Abū Bukra and others took initiative to put al-Mughīra under surveillance — an action not quite consistent with Muslims’ obligations — and highlights the impartiality of ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb.⁶⁰⁸ Instead of using Ibn Sa’d or al-Ṭabarī’s reports, al-Iṣfahānī prefers ‘Umar’s complex and negative accounts.

Al-Iṣfahānī’s preference for ‘Umar b. Shabba in the account of the adultery is explicable when considered in the light of his treatment of al-Mughīra’s conversion and advice for ‘Alī. As an enemy of *shī‘at ‘Alī*, the insincerity of al-Mughīra’s conversion to Islam can be stressed. To accentuate ‘Alī’s merits — his prudence,

⁶⁰⁷ Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, vl.13, 347–348; *Futūḥ al-buldān*, ed. ‘Abdallāh A. al-Ṭabbā‘ and ‘Umar A. al-Ṭabbā‘ (Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Ma‘ārif, ND), 480–482.

⁶⁰⁸ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vl.4, 69–72. One of the contraindications of commanding right and forbidding wrong is respect for privacy and a prohibition against prying and spying, see: Michael Cook, *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 80–82. On privacy, the Qur’ānic verses that explicitly forbid prying and spying upon others include: 24:27 and 49:12; see also: Eli Alshech, “‘Do Not Enter Houses Other than Your Own’: The Evolution of the Notion of a Private Domestic Sphere in Early Sunnī Islamic Thought,” *Islamic Law and Society* 11-3 (2004): 291–332.

discernment, and piety — al-Mughīra's deceitful advice is refuted by 'Alī, without the agency of al-Ḥasan or Ibn al-'Abbās. Similarly, the appeal of 'Umar b. Shabba's convoluted accounts to al-Iṣfahānī lies in their emphasis on Abū Bukra's righteousness and 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb's partiality, which saved the wrongdoer, al-Mughīra. First, Abū Bukra did not spy on al-Mughīra. The wind exposed the affair. Secondly, al-Mughīra, beyond a doubt, was a fornicator, but he evaded the punishment by evoking the sympathy of the Companions and lobbying the fourth witness, Ziyād. Thirdly, the account calls 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb's integrity into question, as illustrated by Abū Bukra's refusal to repent. In addition, 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb's fear of the stones from Heaven shows his awareness of the injustice in this adjudication. Overall, 'Umar b. Shabba's presentation of al-Mughīra is negative and thus conforms to the compiler's sectarian agenda in its emphasis on the sober-mindedness of 'Alī: when everything goes wrong, he is the only person adherent to God's law.

Based on the three issues (the conversion, the advice, and the adultery) we have addressed, it can be asserted that al-Mughīra is not positively presented while 'Alī's virtues are highlighted. We found that al-Iṣfahānī favours the accounts that present al-Mughīra less positively. In the case of conversion and advice, he did not choose al-Ṭabarī's accounts, perhaps because his accounts lack a discussion of al-Mughīra's motivation for his conversion. As for the adultery, Ibn Sa'd and al-Ṭabarī's reports were very likely available to him, but al-Iṣfahānī preferred 'Umar b. Shabba's corpus, which, though lengthy and repetitive, emphasises al-Mughīra's immorality, 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb's partiality, and 'Alī's merits. Hence, investigation of al-Iṣfahānī's selection of material in the article on al-Mughīra suggests a sectarian

agenda at work.

Summary

To recapitulate the results of the three cases above, we found hints of how al-Iṣfahānī reshapes the narrative by means of selection. It seems that al-Iṣfahānī leaves out the positive accounts about Abū Sufyān and omits the references to Khālīd's merits, although the favourable reports about them both are very likely to have been available to him. As for the article about al-Mughīra, al-Iṣfahānī chooses the reports that place the subject in a morally precarious light, in the cases of the adultery and his conversion, while asserting the virtues of 'Alī in the case of his advice. Taken together, these three biographies point towards a general tendency towards positive treatment of 'Alī and the vilification of his enemies. Apart from Abū Sufyān, who represents the source of the enmity towards 'Alī's caliphate, Khālīd and al-Mughīra are known to have vilified 'Alī. That is, the results of our examination of al-Iṣfahānī's selection of material can easily be related to his Shī'ī affiliation. This tendency is echoed in an investigation of another kind of selection, namely, the inclusion of special and rare sources, to which we now move.

5.2. The Use of Special and Rare Sources

Just as al-Iṣfahānī selects particular versions of the stories in accordance with his agenda, he sometimes resorts to special and rare sources. The use of special and rare sources, in a certain context, suggests an editorial decision and thus invites our investigation. The special sources include corpora associated with particular themes,

such as the *aḥādīth ahl al-bayt* of Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Saʿīd b. ʿUqda or the reports that al-Iṣfahānī knew to be of problematic origin. The rare sources comprise reports relayed from direct informants who only appear once in the entire *Aghānī* or who appear several times in only one article. We will start with the special sources. The articles studied in this section include those on Abū Sufyān, Kaʿb b. Mālīk, and al-Kumayt.

5.2.1. The Special Sources

This subsection discusses al-Iṣfahānī’s use of special sources — any corpus of distinctive nature or of problematic origin — in relation to the articulation of his sectarian agenda. The discussion of the former will concentrate on Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Saʿīd b. ʿUqda, whose narrations are specifically related to *ahl al-bayt*. Then, for the latter, we will examine an example of a problematic source in the biography of Kaʿb b. Mālīk.

5.2.1.1. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Saʿīd b. ʿUqda

Instead of listing all the reports related by Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Saʿīd b. ʿUqda (249–333/863–944; Ibn ʿUqda hereafter), we will first introduce him with regard to his sectarian tendency and the characteristics of his narrations; then, we will focus on how al-Iṣfahānī uses his corpus. The purpose of this subsection is to highlight the unusual nature of Ibn ʿUqda’s corpus and its use in the *Aghānī*. How this source and its use indicate a Shīʿī agenda will be deferred to later sections.⁶⁰⁹

⁶⁰⁹ See 5.3, specifically pages 230 and 240.

Ibn ‘Uqda was a *ḥadīth* scholar. From his ancestor, who was a freeman of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Sa‘īd al-Hamadhānī, he acquired his *nisba*, al-Hamadhānī.⁶¹⁰ He probably grew up and received his first education in Kūfa, where his father, nicknamed ‘Uqda (for his knowledge of *al-naḥw* and *al-taṣrīf*, from whom the appellation, Ibn ‘Uqda, originates), worked as a copyist (*warrāq*) and a teacher of Arabic, Qur’ān, and *adab*.⁶¹¹ Renowned for his copious memorisation of *ḥadīth*, he first established himself in Baghdad, after spotting an error in the *ḥadīth* narrated by Ibn Ṣā‘id — a case that led to his temporary imprisonment on the order of the vizier, ‘Alī b. ‘Īsā, but which also brought him reputation.⁶¹² His erudition not only attracted numerous students from Kūfa, Mecca, and Baghdad, but also slanders on his morality, his reliance on books, and his Shī‘ī tendency.⁶¹³

While the sources agree on his Shī‘ī tendency, it is unclear what kind of Shī‘ī Ibn ‘Uqda was. Although al-Ṭūsī labeled him a Jārūdī Zaydī, the Sunnī sources are less clear about his stance towards the first two caliphs.⁶¹⁴ What complicates the problem is that the references to his *tashayyu‘* are in one way or another related to his reliability, which was inevitably subject to contestation among *ḥadīth* scholars. As a result, while al-Dhahabī justifies Ibn ‘Uqda’s mild tendency (*tashayyu‘ mutawassiṭ*) on the basis of his statement that the love for both ‘Alī and ‘Uthmān only exists in the hearts of noble-minded men,⁶¹⁵ Abū‘Umar Ḥayyuwayh rejects his narrations

⁶¹⁰ Al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, vl.6, 147–148.

⁶¹¹ Al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, vl.6, 149–150; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 976.

⁶¹² Al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, vl.6, 148–152; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 977.

⁶¹³ There are positive and negative views on his reliability: al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, vl.6, 154–158; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 978–979; *idem*, *Mizān*, vl.1, 281–282; al-Ṣafādī, *al-Wāfī*, vl.7, 258; Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān*, vl.1, 601–604; ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Udayy al-Jurjānī, *al-Kāmil fī ḍu‘afā’ al-rijāl*, ed. ‘Ādil A. ‘Abd al-Mawjūd, ‘Alī M. Mu‘awwiḍ and ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ Abū Sunna (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2008), vl.1, 338–339.

⁶¹⁴ Al-Ṭūsī, *al-Fihrist*, 28.

⁶¹⁵ Al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, vl.6, 149; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 976; *idem*, *Mizān*, vl.1, 281–282.

after discovering that Ibn ‘Uqda dictated the defamatory accounts about the Companions (*mathālib al-ṣaḥāba*) at the mosque of Barāthā, a Shī‘ī mosque located on the road from Baghdad to Muḥawwal, in the west.⁶¹⁶

It is not possible to know to what extent the Jārūdī Zaydī label given by al-Ṭūsī — a Mu‘tazilī Imāmī Shī‘ī living in the eleventh century — is valid, on the basis of what the Sunnī compilers claimed to have been spelled out by Ibn ‘Uqda.⁶¹⁷ Nevertheless, the biographical sources are still useful in the sense that they all attest to Ibn ‘Uqda’s *ḥadīth* scholarship and to his impressive transmission (more than 100,000 narrations) of the corpus about *ahl al-bayt*.⁶¹⁸ In other words, Ibn ‘Uqda was recognized as an authority on the *aḥādīth ahl al-bayt*. It seems that al-Iṣfahānī, who narrates directly from Ibn ‘Uqda, was aware of his teacher’s expertise and consciously availed himself of this special source. Whenever al-Iṣfahānī quotes from him, he mentions information about ‘Alī, his descendants, and the Ṭālibids. The table below shows al-Iṣfahānī’s quotations from Ibn ‘Uqda. The left-hand column marks the location of the given report, while the right outlines its content.⁶¹⁹

Volume/Page	Theme
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⁶¹⁶ Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 978–979. The location of Barāthā: Guy Le Strange, *Baghdad during the Abbasid Caliphate* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900), 153–157; Jacob Lassner, *The Topography of Baghdad in the Early Middle Ages: Text and Studies* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1970), 97, 204.

⁶¹⁷ See footnote 614.

⁶¹⁸ Al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, vl.6, 151–152; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 977; *idem*, *Mīzān*, vl.1, 281. The list of the titles of his works seems to concur with this point, for instance, the *musnads* of ‘Alī, al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn, Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad b. ‘Alī, Zayd b. ‘Alī, and Ja‘far b. Muḥammad: al-Ṭūsī, *al-Fihrist*, 29.

⁶¹⁹ For al-Iṣfahānī’s use of Ibn ‘Uqda’s corpus, I searched the following indices: Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Sa‘īd, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Sa‘īd b. ‘Uqda, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Sa‘īd al-Kūfī, and Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Sa‘īd al-Hamadhānī. They seem to be the same person, because it is not uncommon for al-Iṣfahānī to name his informants in abbreviated form; for instance, Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Jawharī is interchangeable with al-Jawharī. Further, the *nisbas*, al-Hamadhānī and al-Kūfī, agree with the biographical information mentioned on page 204. See: al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, indices; Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 36–37.

1/27	‘Alī was the person who killed ‘Uqba b. Abī Mu‘ayt and al-Naḍr b. al-Ḥārith
9/15	‘Abdallāh b. Ja‘far reproached Kuthayyir’s Kaysānī conviction
12/152	Manzūr b. Zabbān, the father-in-law of al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī, was born after a four-year pregnancy
12/153	The marriage between al-Ḥasan and Manzūr’s daughter
12/171–172	A <i>ḥadīth</i> that confirms a genealogical account about Asmā’ bint ‘Umayy, who was married to Ja‘far b. Abī Ṭālib, Abū Bakr, and then ‘Alī, and the sister of the wives of al-‘Abbās, Ḥamza, and the Prophet
12/172	The Prophet’s invocation for Asmā’ bint ‘Umayy
12/172	The Prophet’s invocation for ‘Abdallāh b. Ja‘far
12/173–174	The generosity of ‘Abdallāh b. Ja‘far
12/174	The generosity of ‘Abdallāh b. Ja‘far
12/174–175	The generosity of ‘Abdallāh b. Ja‘far
12/175	The generosity of ‘Abdallāh b. Ja‘far
12/175	The generosity of ‘Abdallāh b. Ja‘far
12/176–177	The funeral of ‘Abdallāh b. Ja‘far
12/186	The relationship between ‘Abdallāh b. Mu‘āwiya and ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Ubaydallāh b. al-‘Abbās
12/186–187	The relationship between ‘Abdallāh b. Mu‘āwiya and ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Ubaydallāh b. al-‘Abbās
16/103–104	The marriage between al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī and al-Rabbāb bint Imru’ al-Qays b. ‘Adī
16/105	The marriage between al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥasan and the daughter of al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī, Fāṭima
16/105	Sukayna bint al-Ḥusayn boasted to a daughter of ‘Uthmān of her lineage
16/106	Sukayna and her maids scolded Ibn Muṭayra, the governor of Medina, who abused ‘Alī from the pulpit ⁶²⁰
16/232	A <i>ḥadīth</i> about <i>jihād</i>
16/282	Hind gave birth to Mūsā b. ‘Abdallāh b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī at the age of sixty
17/21	Al-Kumayt recited his Hāshimiyyāt to Ja‘far b. Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq
17/27	Al-Kumayt’s narration of <i>ḥadīth</i> from Abū Ja‘far al-Bāqir
21/93	The marriage between al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥasan and Fāṭima bint al-Ḥusayn
21/94	Fāṭima’s remarriage after the death of al-Ḥasan
21/94–95	Fāṭima’s remarriage after the death of al-Ḥasan on her mother’s insistence
21/95	The merits of ‘Abdallāh b. al-Ḥasan
21/95	‘Abdallāh b. al-Ḥasan was the first-born child in the combination of the Ḥasanid and Ḥusaynid lines
21/96	Manzūr b. Zabbān’s comments on the sons of ‘Abdallāh b. al-Ḥasan
21/96	A legal judgment, based on the <i>‘amal</i> of ‘Abdallāh b. al-Ḥasan, narrated by Mālik ⁶²¹
21/97	The letter of Abū al-‘Abbās to ‘Abdallāh b. al-Ḥasan about his two sons, Muḥammad and Ibrāhīm
24/126	A dialogue between the two Hāshimīs

Table 5.2.1.1. The Citations from Ibn ‘Uqda in the *Aghānī*

These reports corroborate the biographical sources, which mention Ibn ‘Uqda’s Shī‘ī tendency and the impressive number of his narrations about *ahl al-bayt*. All of the quotations by al-Iṣfahānī from Ibn ‘Uqda are all related to *ahl al-bayt*, who are

⁶²⁰ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vl.7, 90–91.

⁶²¹ On *‘amal*: Yasin Dutton, *The Origins of Islamic Law: the Qur’ān, the Muwaṭṭa’ and Medinan ‘Amal* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1999), 32–41.

mostly presented in a positive light in these reports. In other words, Ibn ‘Uqda’s corpus functions as a repository of information about the Ṭālibids and is used by al-Iṣfahānī when he needs to clarify their genealogies and accentuate their merits.

Although Ibn ‘Uqda’s corpus is unusual in terms of the type of material it contains, its presence in the *Aghānī* does not itself indicate the infiltration of a Shī‘ī agenda *per se*. That al-Ṭabarī quotes Sayf b. ‘Umar’s narrations does not necessarily imply that he accepts their value or the views embedded within his accounts.⁶²² Likewise, al-Iṣfahānī sometimes includes reports of whose credibility he is not convinced.⁶²³ Why, then, can Ibn ‘Uqda’s corpus be seen as something special and indicative of al-Iṣfahānī’s agenda? As shown in Table 5.2.1.1, al-Iṣfahānī’s narrations from Ibn ‘Uqda all have something to do with *ahl al-bayt*. This implies that al-Iṣfahānī connects a certain type of material to this informant. This connection can provide insights into al-Iṣfahānī’s motivation for including a report from Ibn ‘Uqda: when al-Iṣfahānī quotes from Ibn ‘Uqda and his purpose is not just to offer necessary information, such as clarifying the *nasab* of a Ṭālibid, it may be asked whether he seeks to make a point.

We have highlighted the uniqueness of Ibn ‘Uqda as al-Iṣfahānī’s source by far. How the use of this special source reflects al-Iṣfahānī’s agenda will be further addressed in the article about al-Kumayt and, possibly, that about al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī, in section three (5.3). The quotation from Ibn ‘Uqda’s corpus is examined in the context of al-

⁶²² The discussion on al-Ṭabarī’s use of Sayf b. ‘Umar’s narrations: M.G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), vl.1, 350–358; R.S. Humphreys, ‘Qur’anic Myth and Narrative Structure in Early Islamic Historiography,’ in *Tradition and Innovation in Late Antiquity*, ed. F.M. Clover and R.S. Humphreys (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 271–290. Petersen, *‘Alī*, 157

⁶²³ For al-Iṣfahānī’s critique on Ibn Khurdādhbih, see footnote 547.

Iṣfahānī's use of repetition.⁶²⁴ Now, let us turn to the use of the problematic source.

5.2.1.2 A Problematic Source in the Biography about Ka'b b. Mālik

This article consists of three parts: first, a long profile; second, the reports about Ka'b; third, a section on Ka'b's father, Mālik b. Abī Ka'b, who is also a poet. The paragraphs below will only consider the section about Ka'b b. Mālik.

In the profile, al-Iṣfahānī first mentions Ka'b's genealogy and specifies his identity: a poet, one of the Companions of the Prophet, a Badrī 'Aqabī (a participant in the Raid on al-'Aqaba). Then, he turns to some reports about Ka'b's father and uncle.⁶²⁵ After this, there follows a list of the poets amongst Ka'b's descendants and then Ka'b's narration of the *ḥadīth*.⁶²⁶ Finally, his 'Uthmānī tendency is highlighted:

Ka'b b. Mālik was an 'Uthmānī, one of those who refrained from paying allegiance to 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and did not fight with him. His speech addressing 'Alī and 'Uthmān's murderers regarding the issue of 'Uthmān will be mentioned later in his [Ka'b's] reports. Then, he withdrew from him. He has elegies on 'Uthmān b. 'Affān, may God have mercy on him, and [poems] instigating the Anṣārs to aid him before his murder and reprimanding them for deserting him.⁶²⁷

Then, al-Iṣfahānī includes an example of his 'Uthmānī poetry. The profile shows the compiler's interest in the post-Prophetic part of Ka'b's life. This engagement is unusual, because most of the compilers tend to be silent about it, as we will see below. After the profile, Ka'b's entry comprises ten reports, seven of which are

⁶²⁴ See 5.3.3.

⁶²⁵ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.16, 171.

⁶²⁶ *Ibid.*, vl.16, 171–172.

⁶²⁷ *Ibid.*, vl.16, 172.

narrated from ‘Umar b. Shabba via Ḥabīb b. Naṣr al-Muhallabī and Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Jawharī; these reports highlight his partisanship for ‘Uthmān, during the siege of the latter’s residence, and his role as a poet.⁶²⁸ The ninth report addresses the dialogue between Ka‘b and ‘Alī on the outset of the first *fiṭna*, to which the profile of the article refers. We will discuss this report further below. The rest of the article is devoted to Mālīk b. Abī Ka‘b, the father of Ka‘b.⁶²⁹

The article about Ka‘b illustrates his poetic role. In this respect, the *Aghānī* does not differ from other compilations. Ka‘b’s defence of Islam through his poetry is acknowledged by the Prophet and widely reported.⁶³⁰ However, the unusual point in this article lies in the inclusion of the ninth report and its implication. This report seems unreliable, as, in the *isnād*, it states: Ibn ‘Ammār, from Muḥammad b. Maṣṣūr al-Raba‘ī, and he [either Ibn ‘Ammār or al-Raba‘ī] mentions that it is an *isnād sha’ām*⁶³¹ — a chain of weakness and incompleteness.⁶³² Ibn ‘Ammār relates a lengthy account mentioning Ḥassān b. Thābit, al-Nu‘mān b. Bashīr, and Ka‘b b. Mālīk, but, here, al-Iṣfahānī only mentions the part about Ka‘b: when ‘Alī became the caliph, Ḥassān, al-Nu‘mān, and Ka‘b, all of whom were ‘Uthmānīs and preferred the Banū Umayya to the Banū Hāshim, decided to side with Mu‘āwiya. Then, when their decision reached ‘Alī, they came to ‘Alī and Ka‘b said to him:

O the Commander of the Faithful, tell us about ‘Uthmān. Was he killed for wrongdoing and, thus, we say what you say (*fa-naqūl bi-qawlika*)? Or he was killed wrongfully,

⁶²⁸ *Ibid.*, vl.16, 173–177. This emphasis echoes what we have seen in the article about Ḥassān b. Thābit, see pages 157–160.

⁶²⁹ *Ibid.*, vl.16, 177–182.

⁶³⁰ Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, vl.4, 395; Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *al-Istī‘āb*, vl.2, 182–183; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīkh*, vl.50, 190–194.

⁶³¹ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.16, 176.

⁶³² Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Iṣāba*, vl.9, 296.

thus we say what we say and submit you to the suspicion? Strange is our certainty and your uncertainty (*al-‘ujb min tayaqquninā wa-shakkika*), while the Arabs claimed that you have the undisputed knowledge. Demonstrate it and let us know.⁶³³

Then, Ka‘b recited a poem on the spot. ‘Alī responded to them: “I have three responses for you. ‘Uthmān monopolized [the wealth of all Muslims] excessively (*ista’tbara ‘Uthmān fa-asā’a al-ithra*). You were saddened excessively (*jazi’tum fa-asa’tum al-jaza’*). What you dispute about will be [judged] by God at the Final Judgment (*wa-‘inda Allāh mā takhtalifūna fīhi ilā yawm al-qiyāma*).” They said: “The Arabs will not be satisfied with this and will not excuse us.” ‘Alī replied: “Are you refuting me in the presence of the Muslims with neither true proof nor clear argument? Get lost and never live in the region where I live.” They left for Mu‘āwiya, who promised each of them money and governorship. Ḥassān and Ka‘b each received a thousand dinars and al-Nu‘mān the governorship of Ḥimṣ.⁶³⁴

Why does al-Iṣfahānī include a report based on *isnād sha’ām*, while he was aware of its flaw? Al-Iṣfahānī sometimes gives a full report and then evaluates its reliability. Thus, it is not uncommon to see him quote an account and judge it to be weak at the end.⁶³⁵ In this report, he simply leaves the report without any comment. Perhaps the remark in the *isnād* already indicates his doubt. Nonetheless, we should consider the fact that most of the compilers tend to be silent about Ka‘b’s involvement in the first *fitna*.⁶³⁶

⁶³³ *Ibid.*, vl.16, 177.

⁶³⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶³⁵ See for instance: al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.16, 181–182; see also footnote 547.

⁶³⁶ Al-Bukhārī only mentions his elegies for ‘Uthmān and says nothing about his participation in the *fitna*; see: Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Iṣāba*, vl.9, 296; Ibn ‘Asākir’s only reference comes from al-Iṣfahānī: *Tārīkh*, vl.50, 177–178; footnote 630.

Apart from al-Iṣfahānī, only al-Ṭabarī and al-Masʿūdī refer to his post-ʿUthmān actions. The latter only alludes to his ʿUthmānī tendency and omits the details.⁶³⁷ Al-Ṭabarī mentions his refraining from paying allegiance to ʿAlī because his interest was linked to ʿUthmān. This account is narrated by ʿUmar b. Shabba, from al-Madāʾinī, and ʿUmar b. Shabba is a major source for al-Iṣfahānī’s information about Kaʿb.⁶³⁸ Why, then, does al-Iṣfahānī include a dubious account when he could have addressed Kaʿb’s involvement in the first *fitna* by quoting ʿUmar b. Shabba, via his teacher al-Ṭabarī or other informants? It seems that al-Iṣfahānī favours this problematic account, over the narration of ʿUmar b. Shabba, due to the dialogue between ʿAlī and Kaʿb, which accentuates ʿAlī’s legitimacy during the civil war. That is, the reluctance of some Companions to pay allegiance to ʿAlī does not erode the basis for his legitimacy, because these Companions, as embodied in the case of Kaʿb, were bribed into joining the opposite camp. Furthermore, ʿAlī’s righteousness vis-à-vis ʿUthmān’s nepotism (*istiʿthār*) is highlighted in the dialogue. In the context of al-Iṣfahānī’s Shīʿī sympathies and the emphasis on the legitimacy of ʿAlī, the inclusion of a flawed source in this case makes sense.

5.2.2. Rare Sources

Rare sources, as defined above, include direct informants who only appear once or appear several times in a single article. This kind of informant accounts for 71 out of al-Iṣfahānī’s 150 direct informants.⁶³⁹ This number is not very impressive, and it does not seem uncommon that al-Iṣfahānī resorts to a rare source. However, when the actual number of narrations, which constitute 24 printed volumes, is taken into

⁶³⁷ Al-Masʿūdī, *Murāj*, vl.2, 352–354.

⁶³⁸ See above page 210; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vl.4, 429–430.

⁶³⁹ Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 29–70.

account, the use of rare sources is quite remarkable. Let us assume that each printed page contains 3 reports and each volume has 250 pages, although most of the volumes reach 300 pages, except for the last two. Then, let us assume that each of these rare sources contribute 2 reports, while most of them appear once only in the entire *Aghānī*. This means that the narrations by the rare sources, 142 reports in totality ($71 \times 2 = 142$), only represent a very small proportion of the 18,000 reports in the *Aghānī*, that is, 0.78%. In other words, although the rare informants themselves are not uncommon, al-Iṣfahānī's reliance on their narrations is noteworthy by virtue of their narrations' very limited presence in the whole *Aghānī*. The article about Ka'b b. Mālīk shows that al-Iṣfahānī uses a problematic source in order to insert a report that highlights 'Alī's legitimacy. In the cases of Abū Sufyān and al-Kumayt, examined in this subsection, al-Iṣfahānī, as we shall see, narrates from unusual informants to achieve the same effect.

5.2.2.1. Abū Sufyān

As mentioned above, al-Iṣfahānī selects the reports underscoring Abū Sufyān's hypocrisy to present the subject in a negative light. In the cluster of the *nifāq* reports, al-Iṣfahānī includes a noteworthy item:

When Abū Bakr was chosen as the caliph, Abū Sufyān came to 'Alī to complain that the least powerful of the Quraysh had seized power. 'Alī refuted him: "O Abū Sufyān, long you have been malicious to God, His Messenger, and Muslims, but this did not harm them! Indeed, we found Abū Bakr to be the right person for this [caliphate]."⁶⁴⁰

⁶⁴⁰ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.6, 272–273.

This report, like the others in the cluster, questions the sincerity of Abū Sufyān as a Muslim and reveals the evil intention that he harbours.⁶⁴¹ The inclusion of this account deserves special attention, as its source is rather unusual: Muḥammad b. Ḥayyān al-Bāhilī (d. 301/913),⁶⁴² a Baghdādī *ḥadīth* scholar of disputed credibility who does not appear very eminent, as he seems to have been confused with another scholar.⁶⁴³ Except for the report quoted by al-Iṣfahānī, the two traditions he narrates do not reveal any particular sectarian interest. One encourages people to be generous to fellow Muslims, while the other warns them not to spill excrement on the streets, which will (reasonably) evoke the curse of God, the angels, and all of humankind.⁶⁴⁴ This unusual source, al-Bāhilī, only appears on this one occasion in the whole *Aghānī*.⁶⁴⁵

Al-Iṣfahānī's inclusion of an unusual source not only enhances the negative image of Abū Sufyān, already achieved by a careful selection of material (specifically, by screening out the positive accounts about his devotion to the *jihād*), but also implies a particular view of the caliphate of Abū Bakr and, presumably, that of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. That is, al-Iṣfahānī seems to agree with the line of argument that acknowledges the legitimacy of the first two caliphs — the notion is clearly embedded in 'Alī's harsh rebuttal — as opposed to the claim that Abū Bakr and 'Umar were usurpers and wrong-doers (*fāsiq*). Otherwise, al-Iṣfahānī would not have included this tendentious account, which has nothing to do with poetry or song, while

⁶⁴¹ Al-Balādhurī narrates two reports similar to this: *Ansāb*, vl.2, 271.

⁶⁴² Fleischhammer writes his name as “Muḥammad b. Ḥubbān”: *Die Quellen*, 61; this may have originated as a typographical error in the edition used by Fleischhammer.

⁶⁴³ Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 3382. al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, vl.3, 117–118.

⁶⁴⁴ Al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, vl.3, 117; al-Ṭabarānī, Abū al-Qāsim Sulaymān b. Muḥammad, *al-Mu'jam al-awsaṭ*, ed. Ṭāriq b. 'Awaḍallāh b. Muḥammad and 'Abd al-Muḥassin b. Ibrāhīm al-Ḥusaynī (Cairo: Dār al-Haramayn li-l-Tibā'a wa-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzī', 1995), vl.5, 320 (5426).

⁶⁴⁵ Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 61.

the presentation of Abū Sufyān as a hypocrite is accomplished by other accounts. It seems that the point here is that ‘Alī is the best man, but the qualifications of Abū Bakr and ‘Umar for the caliphate are recognized. This report articulates al-Iṣfahānī’s stance towards the first schism of the Islamic community, which became a source of the contentions amongst the various sects and thus was inextricably connected to the formation of each sect’s self-view and identity.⁶⁴⁶ However, the fact that al-Iṣfahānī perceives the first two caliphates similarly to the so-called Batrīs does not make him a Batrī. As mentioned in Chapter One, the label Zaydī in this period does not denote a group united by a set of ideas.⁶⁴⁷ The label is meaningless without a context. Furthermore, in the *Maqātil*, al-Iṣfahānī seems to be suspicious towards Batrīs’ ritual practice.⁶⁴⁸ Thus, the inclusion of this report with its firm acknowledgement of Abū Bakr’s caliphate via ‘Alī’s statement does not make al-Iṣfahānī as a Zaydī. However, what can be assuredly known through this use of the rare source is that, in al-Iṣfahānī’s conception, Abū Bakr (and, presumably, ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb) was entitled to the caliphate, which certainly distinguished him from those who hold the first two caliphs as usurpers.⁶⁴⁹

5.2.2.2. Al-Kumayt

The article on al-Kumayt addresses a number of themes: his conflicts with Khālīd al-

⁶⁴⁶ For the Zaydī views on this issue, see: Crone, *Medieval*, 99–101. Halm, *Shiism*, 206–211. Momen, *An Introduction*, 49–51. Haider, *The Origin*, 19–23. A full discussion on the Saqīfa event: S.H.M. Jafri, *The Origin and Early Development of Shi’a Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 27–57.

⁶⁴⁷ See 1.2.

⁶⁴⁸ This can be found in al-Iṣfahānī’s treatment of al-Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ b. Ḥayy and Sulaymān b. Jarīr: *Maqātil*, 259, 345–359, 388–392, 407–408.

⁶⁴⁹ Al-Yā’qūbī, *Tārīkh*, vl.2, 7–11; an extreme example, claiming that the first person who paid allegiance to Abū Bakr was Iblīs: Sulaym b. Qays al-Hilālī, *Kitāb*, ed. Muḥammad B. al-A. al-Zanjānī (Qom: Maṭba‘at al-Hādī, 1999), 136–145; al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, vl.1, 136–145; al-Nawbakhtī and al-Qummī, *Firaq*, 21.

Qasrī, which lead to his panegyrics for Hishām b. ‘Abd al-Malik in exchange for the caliph’s pardon;⁶⁵⁰ the encounters between his son, al-Mustahill, and the ‘Abbāsids;⁶⁵¹ his poetry for the Banū Hāshim;⁶⁵² his narration of *ḥadīth* and *sunna*;⁶⁵³ his tribal factional poetry (*‘aṣabiyya*) for the Northerners against the Southerners;⁶⁵⁴ his interaction with other poets, especially, al-Farazdaq;⁶⁵⁵ and his demise.⁶⁵⁶ Al-Iṣfahānī resorts to three rare sources to illustrate the poet’s narrations from and about the imams. They are ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī, the imam of the mosque of Kūfa; Ja‘far b. Muḥammad b. Marwān al-Ghazzāl al-Kūfī; and Ja‘far b. Muḥammad b. ‘Ubayd b. ‘Utba, from whom al-Iṣfahānī acquires the given narration through correspondence (*akhbaranī Ja‘far...fī kitābihi ilayya*).⁶⁵⁷ Except for ‘Alī b. Muḥammad the imam, who is quoted twice on the same page, the rest of the informants appear only once in the entire *Aghānī*.⁶⁵⁸ As the first two rare sources are related to the repetitive element and will thus be discussed later, in section three, we will only examine the reports from Ja‘far b. Muḥammad b. ‘Ubayd b. ‘Utba.⁶⁵⁹

The narration from Ja‘far b. Muḥammad b. ‘Ubayd b. ‘Utba appears tendentious. The narrator of the account, ‘Ikrima, says that he saw al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī raising his voice

⁶⁵⁰ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.17, 7–15.

⁶⁵¹ *Ibid.*, vl.17, 18–19, 22.

⁶⁵² *Ibid.*, vl.17, 21–23.

⁶⁵³ *Ibid.*, vl.17, 26–27.

⁶⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, vl.17, 30–31.

⁶⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, vl.17, 20–21, 24–25.

⁶⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, vl.17, 32–33. The article in the *Aghānī* provides us with the most copious biography for al-Kumayt, whose information and verses are scattered through other compilations, apart from: Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīkh*, vl.50, 229–247. Other references: al-Jumāhī, *Ṭabaqāt fuḥūl al-shu‘arā’*, ed. Maḥmūd M. Shākir (Jeddah: Dār al-Madanī, ND), 195, 318–320; al-Murzubānī, *Mu‘jam*, 285–286 (530); Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 72, 78, 179; al-Mubarrid, Abū al-‘Abbās Muḥammad b. Yazīd, *al-Kāmil*, ed. Muḥammad A. al-Dālī, 2nd ed. (Beirut: Mu‘assasat al-Risāla, 1997), 690–691, 1237; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Shi‘r*, 581–584.

⁶⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, vl.17, 23, 26–27; indices; Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 40–41, 43.

⁶⁵⁸ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.17, 23.

⁶⁵⁹ See 5.3.3.1.

to utter *lā ilah illā Allāh* when or until he tossed the *jamrat al-‘aqaba* (performed the ritual of stoning Satan). ‘Ikrima asked al-Ḥusayn about it and the latter said that he learnt from his father, that is, ‘Alī. ‘Ikrima then asked Ibn ‘Abbās for confirmation and was scolded: “Bastard (*lā umma laka*)! Are you asking me about something that al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī narrated to you from his father? By God, it is truly the *sunna*.”⁶⁶⁰ In other words, the sayings of ‘Alī and his son are the traditions to be followed and have an authenticity equivalent to those of the Prophet. Al-Iṣfahānī’s use of the rare source in this case is noteworthy, because it seems that the point that he is trying to illustrate is more than al-Kumayt’s transmission of the prophetic traditions, or *sunna*, but the validity of the sayings of imams, as acknowledged by Ibn ‘Abbās. Like the use of the problematic source in the case of Ka‘b b. Mālīk, the reliance on the rare source reveals that it is al-Iṣfahānī’s tendency to highlight the superiority of ‘Alī and his descendants.

Summary

This section reviews al-Iṣfahānī’s use of special and rare sources. The rare sources denote the informants who either appear only once each in the entire *Aghānī* or a few times in a single article and nowhere else. The special sources examined here comprise problematic information and Ibn ‘Uqda, who serves a repository of the reports about and narrations from *ahl al-bayt* for al-Iṣfahānī. Given that Ibn ‘Uqda was recognized as a Shī‘ī *ḥadīth* scholar known for his expertise on the *aḥādīth* about *ahl al-bayt*, which are specifically adduced by al-Iṣfahānī to offer relevant information and highlight their merits, his reports should be treated as a special

⁶⁶⁰ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.17, 26–27.

corpus. How Ibn ‘Uqda’s narrations reveal al-Iṣfahānī’s agenda is illustrated in section three (5.3), with the suitable examples in the article about al-Kumayt and, possibly, that about al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī, as these reports should be understood in a certain context.⁶⁶¹

While the special and rare sources are useful indicators, the use of this material *per se* does not necessarily provide much information about al-Iṣfahānī’s perception of the past. Rather, they have to be examined alongside other factors, such as their role and function within the articles. The use of the problematic — the *isnād sha’ām* in the biography of Ka‘b b. Mālīk — and rare sources including Muḥammad b. Ḥayyān al-Bāhilī and Ja‘far b. Muḥammad b. ‘Ubayd b. ‘Utba, when considered in their own contexts, show al-Iṣfahānī’s predilection for accentuating the role of ‘Alī and his descendants. ‘Alī and his offspring are presented as the guides and the paragon of the *sunna*. Moreover, the rare source also yields insights into al-Iṣfahānī’s historiographical perspective, as shown in the article on Abū Sufyān.⁶⁶²

5.3. Repetitive Elements: Curse, Love and Salvation

This section presents the instances in which al-Iṣfahānī’s use of repetition can be interpreted as an indication of his Shī‘ī sympathy. The biographees include Abū al-Aswad al-Du‘alī, Khālīd al-Qasrī, ‘Alī b. al-Jahm, Di‘bal, al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī, and al-Kumayt. In what follows, the articles are divided into three subsections, based on

⁶⁶¹ The use of the special source in the biography of al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī should be set aside from our discussion, because it is not clear whether the informant in question in that article, Ahmad b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Sa‘īd al-Hamdānī, can be identified with Ibn ‘Uqda; see page 205.

⁶⁶² Another example of the use of a rare source can be found in the article about Shurayḥ, which does not meet the criterion for inclusion by this research. An analysis of this article is thus to be found in Appendix Five.

the repetitive themes: the cursing or denigration of the enemies of ‘Alī; love for ‘Alī; and the salvation promised for *shī‘at ‘Alī*. These three themes can be read as an attempt on al-Iṣfahānī’s part to accentuate his view that the enemies of ‘Alī are to be condemned, while the love for him is to be highlighted and his protégés praised. Each subsection presents the biographies in alphabetical order.

5.3.1. ‘Alī’s Opponents

This subsection examines the articles on ‘Alī b. al-Jahm⁶⁶³ and Khālīd al-Qasrī: the former was the boon companion of al-Mutawakkil, while the latter was the governor of Iraq for Hishām b. ‘Abd al-Malik. Both are known to have vilified ‘Alī for propagandistic purposes.⁶⁶⁴ In both cases, al-Iṣfahānī repeatedly emphasises either his own curse on the biographee or the biographee’s negative attribute — deception (*kidhb*) — to present them in a negative light. We will begin with the analysis of ‘Alī b. al-Jahm’s biography.

5.3.1.1. ‘Alī b. al-Jahm

The article on ‘Alī b. al-Jahm can be divided into two parts. The first part comprises his genealogy and a profile by al-Iṣfahānī, while the second consists of reports about his interaction with others, especially al-Mutawakkil and the courtiers, the occasions of his compositions and his moral defect — deception.⁶⁶⁵

⁶⁶³ ‘Alī b. al-Jahm’s article may illustrate al-Iṣfahānī’s selection of material, if we compare the article with Ibn al-Mu‘tazz’s *Ṭabaqāt*, which may have been available to al-Iṣfahānī. Briefly speaking, al-Iṣfahānī emphasises ‘Alī b. al-Jahm’s *kidhb*, while Ibn al-Mu‘tazz mentions nothing of the kind. That is, ‘Alī b. al-Jahm is more negatively portrayed. See: Ibn al-Mu‘tazz, *Ṭabaqāt*, 319–320; Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 110–111.

⁶⁶⁴ See the reference in Table 5.

⁶⁶⁵ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.10, 175–197.

In the first part, al-Iṣfahānī dedicates special attention to the genuine identification of ‘Alī b. al-Jahm’s tribal origins. ‘Alī b. al-Jahm’s ancestry is traced back to Sāma b. Lu’ayy b. Ghālib, one of the forefathers of the Quraysh. Yet, right after this *nasab*, al-Iṣfahānī denies their derivation from the Quraysh and, to demonstrate the falsehood of this derivation, he cites statements from Ibn al-Kalbī, al-Haytham b. ‘Adī and the Prophet.⁶⁶⁶

The second part of the article devotes a sizeable section to ‘Alī b. al-Jahm’s conflicts with other courtiers and officials, such as Ibn Abī Du’ād, Muḥammad al-Zayyāt, and Bakhtīshū,⁶⁶⁷ and the punishments inflicted upon him by the caliph.⁶⁶⁸ A noteworthy element among these reports is the emphasis on ‘Alī b. al-Jahm as a liar, revealed in his baseless statements and in his theft of the poetry. According to the caliph, al-Mutawakkil, ‘Alī b. al-Jahm was the most dishonest creature (*akdhab khalq Allāh*), who claimed to have lived in five different regions and in each for thirty years — a completely pointless lie, as the caliph comments.⁶⁶⁹ Similarly, he is called a liar (*kadhdhāb*) by Ibrāhīm b. al-Mudabbir for fabricating the account of how he first displayed his poetic gift when studying in the *kuttāb*, in order to elevate his own status.⁶⁷⁰ Another report relates that ‘Alī b. al-Jahm claimed to have composed a poem, which was, in fact, the work of Ibrāhīm b. al-‘Abbās. This motif is repeated in two reports, with emphasis on his dishonesty and unscrupulousness.⁶⁷¹ Al-Iṣfahānī’s emphasis on *kidhb* matches his summary of the subject in the profile: ‘Alī b. al-Jahm was first honoured by al-Mutawakkil, but then kicked out of his entourage and

⁶⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, vl.10, 173–174.

⁶⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, vl.10, 175–176, 184, 187, 193.

⁶⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, vl.10, 177–178, 180–181, 184–185, 194–196.

⁶⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, vl.10, 179.

⁶⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, vl.10, 184.

⁶⁷¹ *Ibid.*, vl.10, 179, 186.

punished. The main cause, according to the *Aghānī*, was that ‘Alī b. al-Jahm often lied about other boon companions. Then, al-Mutawakkil found out about his lies, because his victims conspired together to take revenge on him for his maltreatment of them.⁶⁷²

In a nutshell, the overall portrayal of ‘Alī b. al-Jahm is negative throughout the article. First, his tribal origin is called into question, with a Prophetic repudiation. Then, the recurrent element that highlights his *kidhb* further contributes to the denigration of this poet, who imitated Marwān b. Abī Ḥafṣa in his vilification of Āl Abī Ṭālib and ‘Alī’s partisans in order to pander to his patron, according to al-Iṣfahānī.⁶⁷³ A similar but more explicit attempt to present the enemies of ‘Alī negatively is found in the article on Khālīd.

5.3.1.2. Khālīd al-Qasrī

In section one (5.1), we addressed al-Iṣfahānī’s selection of material in the article on Khālīd: he only included the reports that illustrate Khālīd’s wickedness and excluded the positive accounts of his eloquence and generosity, despite the availability of this sort of material. Apart from the selection of such reports, al-Iṣfahānī’s reiteration of his curse upon Khālīd, of the latter’s illegitimate origin, and of his deceptive nature all betrays his dislike for this subject.

In the profile, after offering the full lineage of Khālīd, al-Iṣfahānī explains the origin

⁶⁷² *Ibid.*, vl.10, 175.

⁶⁷³ *Ibid.*, vl.10, 175.

of the Bajīla, the tribe of Khālīd, which was a noble tribe.⁶⁷⁴ However, al-Iṣfahānī also questions Khālīd's affiliation to the Bajīla: "The experts on *mathālib* deny his attribution to his father and say things which I shall mention duly in the disparaging reports about Khālīd (*akhbār Khālīd al-madhmūma*) in our book, God willing."⁶⁷⁵ In other words, Khālīd inherited a renowned lineage, but his attribution to this lineage was in doubt. The implication of Khālīd's problematic *nasab* is one of the themes that dominate the article itself. The reports of the *aṣḥāb al-mathālib*, specifically, those from Abū 'Ubayda,⁶⁷⁶ are repeated five times in the article.⁶⁷⁷

Besides the recurrent reminders of Khālīd's bastard origin — he was the descendant of a slave and a prostitute, according to *aṣḥāb al-mathālib* — it is obvious that al-Iṣfahānī never hesitates to denigrate Khālīd. In the beginning and at the end of the biography, al-Iṣfahānī recounts Khālīd's cooperation with women in order to trick 'Umar b. Abī Rabī'a in his youth.⁶⁷⁸ The report itself is not necessarily negative, in the context of *the Aghānī*. However, when these two reports are set alongside the disparaging reports about the subject, specifically, those illustrating his deceptive nature, this juxtaposition may create the overall effect of enhancing Khālīd's vice.

Moreover, al-Iṣfahānī's cursing permeates through the article and constitutes one of the most remarkable repetitive elements. In addition to the curse in the profile, which will be addressed later with al-Iṣfahānī's comments,⁶⁷⁹ al-Iṣfahānī curses Khālīd

⁶⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, vl.22, 5–6.

⁶⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, vl.22, 6.

⁶⁷⁶ Abū 'Ubayda was an *akhbārī*, known for his predilection for *mathālib* and as the author of relevant works, such as *Kitāb al-Mathālib*: Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 58–59.

⁶⁷⁷ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.22, 6, 12–14.

⁶⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, vl.22, 9–12, 24–25.

⁶⁷⁹ Page 243.

when referring to his vilification of ‘Alī⁶⁸⁰ and when Khālīd shows his contempt for the Prophet.⁶⁸¹ Finally, when the article comes to an end, al-Iṣfahānī says: “The reports of Khālīd, God’s curse upon him forever, end.”⁶⁸² It is unlikely that the curses derive from al-Iṣfahānī’s sources, as he usually distinguishes his comments from the utterances of his informants.⁶⁸³

With al-Iṣfahānī’s curses and the reminders of Khālīd illegitimate origin and deceptive nature, Khālīd al-Qasrī, in the *Aghānī*, pays the price for his antagonism towards ‘Alī and his family. The use of repetition, in addition to the selection of material, as we have seen in section one (5.1), points to a general trend in al-Iṣfahānī’s editorial predilection — to portray the enemies of ‘Alī and Shī‘īs in a negative light.

Like ‘Alī b. al-Jahm’s article, Khālīd’s biography is suffused with examples of Khālīd’s wickedness. His origin from the Bajīla is first denied. Then, he is presented as a liar, repeatedly cursed by al-Iṣfahānī. In both biographies about ‘Alī b. al-Jahm and Khālīd, al-Iṣfahānī reiterates negative motifs — deceptive nature, humble origins, and other vices — to villainise the enemies of Shī‘īs and of ‘Alī. As discussed in the following subsection, al-Iṣfahānī also resorts to the use of repetition in the articles on Abū al-Aswad al-Du‘alī and Di‘bal, but for the opposite purpose — to highlight their love for ‘Alī and *ahl al-bayt*.

5.3.2. *Ḥubb li-‘Alī wa-ahl baytihi* (Love for ‘Alī and his family)

⁶⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, vl.22, 8, 18.

⁶⁸¹ *Ibid.*, vl.22, 15, 17.

⁶⁸² *Ibid.*, vl.22, 25.

⁶⁸³ See footnote 428.

As in the two articles examined above, al-Iṣfahānī uses repetition, but, here, for underscoring the subjects's love for 'Alī and his family in the biographies of Abū al-Aswad al-Du'alī and Di'bal. In the former, al-Iṣfahānī repeatedly narrates Abū al-Aswad's persistent partisanship for 'Alī, in spite of the resultant poverty and hardship. The latter's partisanship is illustrated in a fight over the robe of imam al-Riḍā, which Di'bal received as a reward for his panegyric. This repetitive element suggests the existence of a Shī'ī agenda in the *Aghānī*, because it shows that this kind of theme deserves special attention and emphasis in the view of al-Iṣfahānī. Following alphabetical order, we begin with the article about Abū al-Aswad.

5.3.2.1. Abū al-Aswad al-Du'alī

This article comprises a section on his contribution to the *naḥw*,⁶⁸⁴ his narration of *ḥadīth*,⁶⁸⁵ the posts to which he was appointed during 'Alī's caliphate,⁶⁸⁶ his characteristics (parsimony, baldness, bad breath, and others); and his encounters with others, including Mu'āwiya, Ziyād b. Abīhi, and Ziyād's son, 'Ubaydallāh.⁶⁸⁷ The article opens with a profile concerning his genealogy and al-Iṣfahānī's summary: "He was one of the leading figures of *shī'at 'Alī*."⁶⁸⁸ This is the point that the compiler repeatedly underscores, as we will see below.

The key elements in the article are also found in other compilations, for instance, his Shī'ī tendency, bad breath (*bukhr*), and his contribution to the science of the Arabic

⁶⁸⁴ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.12, 238–240.

⁶⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, vl.12, 240–241.

⁶⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, vl.12, 241–242.

⁶⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, vl.12, 240–267.

⁶⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, vl.12, 238.

language.⁶⁸⁹ However, in the *Aghānī*, the repetitive element further asserts the Shī'ī sentiment in the article. In the beginning, al-Iṣfahānī portrays him as the leading Shī'ī figure. Other reports mention that he was deprived of financial aid due to his inclination towards 'Alī (*hawā fī 'Alī*)⁶⁹⁰ and the violent treatment he received from the Banū Qushayr, an 'Uthmānī clan, who stoned him at night.⁶⁹¹ He also suffered from the reproach of a friend, who believed that his persistent love for 'Alī prevented him from enjoying a life of comfort.⁶⁹² These reports, scattered throughout the article, repeatedly illustrate Abū al-Aswad's uncompromising *tashayyu'*. This sentiment reaches a climax in his *khuṭba*, when he heard of the assassination of 'Alī: "...he (the assassinator) extinguishes the light of God on His earth, which shall never come out again after him (namely, 'Alī). He demolished a pillar of God's pillars; his like shall never be erected..." Apart from the repetitive effect, it is notable that this *khuṭba*-report also appears to be mentioned by al-Iṣfahānī alone.

Amongst the numerous issues addressed in this article, Abū al-Aswad's love for 'Alī is repeatedly accentuated. It seems that, in accordance with the compiler's agenda, the subject's inclination towards 'Alī deserves a great deal of treatment from him. Although the biography of Abū al-Aswad does not essentially differ from other works, the recurrent element implies the Shī'ī concern in the *Aghānī*. In a similar vein, al-Iṣfahānī illustrates the importance of the love for *ahl al-bayt* in the biography of Di'bal.

⁶⁸⁹ Ibn Qutayba, *al-Ma'ārif*, 434, 586; Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, vl.9, 98; al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh*, vl.1, 48-58; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 2072–2073; Ibn al-Anbārī, *Nuzhat al-allibā' fī ṭabaqāt al-udabā'* (Zarqā': Maktabat al-Manār, 1985), 18–24.

⁶⁹⁰ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.12, 250, 254, 260.

⁶⁹¹ *Ibid.*, vl.12, 256–257.

⁶⁹² *Ibid.*, vl.12, 258.

5.3.2.2. Di‘bal

The article about Di‘bal comprises a number of themes: his Shī‘ī tendency;⁶⁹³ his flyting with Abū Sa‘d al-Makhzūmī;⁶⁹⁴ his desperado life, as a result of his tension with and lampoons against the caliphs from al-Rashīd to al-Mu‘taṣim and against some court notables, such as Aḥmad b. Abī Du‘ād and Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī;⁶⁹⁵ and his death.⁶⁹⁶ It seems that al-Iṣfahānī’s treatment of Di‘bal does not differ from that of other compilers.⁶⁹⁷ However, one repetitive element is noteworthy.

In the profile, al-Iṣfahānī illustrates Di‘bal’s Shī‘ī sympathy with the report about his encounter with ‘Alī al-Riḍā. His best poem, according to al-Iṣfahānī, is the panegyric he presented to ‘Alī al-Riḍā in Khurāsān. As a reward, al-Riḍā gave him 10,000 dirhams, minted in his name, and his robe. The people of Qom tried to buy the robe from him at the price of 30,000 dirhams, but he refused. Thus, the people of Qom tried to rob him until they made an agreement: Di‘bal took the sum and kept a sleeve of the robe, while the rest belonged to the people of Qom.⁶⁹⁸ The account is mentioned twice in the article.⁶⁹⁹ A twofold repetition does not seem impressive. Nonetheless, the repetition should be understood in the context of Di‘bal’s preference

⁶⁹³ *Ibid.*, vl.20, 94–95.

⁶⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, vl.20, 127–137.

⁶⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, vl.20, 95, 97–98, 100–116, 120–126, 137–143.

⁶⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, vl.20, 143.

⁶⁹⁷ However, it must be noted that the *Aghānī* offers the most detailed and copious accounts. Al-Mufīd, *al-Irshād fī ma‘rifat ḥujaj Allāh ‘alā al-‘ibād*, ed. Mu‘assasat Āl al-Bayt li-Iḥyā’ al-Turāth (Beirut: Mu‘assasat Āl al-Bayt li-Iḥyā’ al-Turāth, 1995), vl.2, 263–264; al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *al-Āmālī*, vl.1, 483–484; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, vl.2, 266; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Shi‘r*, 849–850; al-Dhahabī, *Duwal al-islām*, ed. Ḥasan Ismā‘īl Marwa and Maḥmūd al-Arnā’ūt (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1999), vl.1, 217; *idem*, *Siyar*, 1663; Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān*, vl.3, 419–422; Ibn al-Mu‘tazz, *Ṭabaqāt*, 266–268; al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, vl.9, 360; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīkh*, vl.17, 245–277.

⁶⁹⁸ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.20, 94–95.

⁶⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, vl.20, 115–116.

for the ‘Alids over other patrons, despite the benefits offered by the latter,⁷⁰⁰ and of the hostility of the court, which he suffers due to his *tashayyu* ‘ and acrimonious lampoons.⁷⁰¹ The notion of love for ‘Alī, regardless of hardship, is recapitulated in a report about Di‘bal’s encounter with a Jinn named Zabyān b. ‘Āmir. When Di‘bal was fleeing the pursuit of the caliph, he spent a night in Naysābūr. All of sudden, a Jinn greeted him and requested that he recite his poem dedicated to ‘Alī al-Riḍā. Then, the Jinn burst into tears after the recitation and narrated a *ḥadīth* he had heard from Ja‘far al-Šādiq to Di‘bal in order to increase his determination (*niyya*) in and adherence to his [Shī‘ī] belief (*alā uḥaddithuka ḥadīthan yazīdu fī niyyatika wayu ‘īnuka ‘alā al-tamassuki bi-madhhabika*). The *ḥadīth* is rather simple: the Prophet said that ‘Alī and his *shī‘a* are victorious (*fā‘izūn*).⁷⁰² This report links the two key themes of the article, Di‘bal’s sectarian tendency and his desperado life. The reiteration of his poem for al-Riḍā, although to a lesser extent, when read in conjuncture with Di‘bal’s sufferings, accentuates love for ‘Alī, as in the article about Abū al-Aswad al-Du‘alī.

In the two articles discussed above, repetition is used to illustrate the biographees’ love for ‘Alī and his family (specifically, al-Riḍā in the article about Di‘bal). This marks a contrast with the repetitive elements in the articles on ‘Alī b. al-Jahm and Khālīd al-Qasrī, which reveal their negative sides. While repetition can be used to vilify the enemies of ‘Alī, in these two articles, it is employed to highlight the importance of uncompromising love for ‘Alī. A similar conclusion is reached through examination of the biographies of two Shī‘ī poets, al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī and al-

⁷⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, vl.20, 138–139.

⁷⁰¹ *Ibid.*, vl.20, 95, 111–113.

⁷⁰² *Ibid.*, vl.20, 110.

Kumayt. However, in these cases, the emphasis lies not only on love for ‘Alī, but also on the salvation promised to his partisans.

5.3.3. The Salvation of *shī‘at ‘Alī*

5.3.3.1. Al-Kumayt

We have addressed al-Iṣfahānī’s use of rare sources in the biography of al-Kumayt in subsection two (5.2.2) and referred to his narrations from two rare sources, namely, Ja‘far b. Muḥammad b. Marwān al-Ghazzāl (hereafter, Ja‘far al-Ghazzāl), and ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī, the imam of the mosque of Kūfa, which have something to do with the repetitive elements. These quotations from the rare sources will be investigated alongside al-Iṣfahānī’s use of repetition, which needs be explained in the context of the article itself. Thus, the profile of al-Kumayt and the context of the repetitive motifs are presented here.

According to al-Iṣfahānī, al-Kumayt b. Zayd is an outstanding poet (*shā‘ir muqaddam*), a scholar of the Arabic language and *ayyām*, and one of the Muḍarī poets against the Qaḥṭānīs. He died before the ‘Abbāsīd caliphate and is known for his partisanship for the Banū Hāshim. His *Hāshimiyyāt* comprises some of his best poetry. As a result of his partisanship against the Yemenīs, his involvement in flyting, *munāqaḍa*, continued even after his death. Dī‘bal and Abū ‘Uyayna responded to his famous anti-Yemenī poem.⁷⁰³

⁷⁰³ *Ibid.*, vl.17, 5.

Although al-Kumayt was a partisan of the Banū Hāshim, al-Iṣfahānī is aware of his panegyrics for the Umayyads and his association with Khālīd al-Qasrī, who was much hated by the Shīʿīs, including by al-Iṣfahānī himself. However, this does not mar his loyalty to the Hāshīmīs, because he was forced to flatter Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik to save his own life from the trickery of Khālīd al-Qasrī, according to the *Aghānī*.⁷⁰⁴ When the Syrian Kalbī poet, Ḥakīm b. ʿAyyāsh, who was under the patronage of the Umayyads, lampooned ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, al-Kumayt responded to him by stirring up tribal fanaticism (*ʿaṣabiyya*) between the Northerners and Southerners. His tactic was to boast of the Banū Umayya as the members of the Northerners to Ḥakīm b. ʿAyyāsh, who would never dare to impinge on the dignity of his patrons and thus would refrain from satirizing ʿAlī. The tactic worked and al-Kumayt did stop Ḥakīm b. ʿAyyāsh vilifying ʿAlī.⁷⁰⁵ That is, al-Kumayt himself was not voluntarily involved in the tribal fanaticism, but he got involved for ʿAlī’s sake. Apart from giving the context for al-Kumayt’s “treason” and *ʿaṣabiyya*, al-Iṣfahānī mitigates this awkwardness by repeating two motifs: first, al-Kumayt’s sincere devotion to the Banū Hāshim; second, the pardon for him from the Prophet and the imams, al-Bāqir and al-Ṣādiq.⁷⁰⁶

His sincere partisanship for the Banū Hāshim is illustrated in two reports, which narrate that al-Kumayt refused any monetary reward from Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-

⁷⁰⁴ See footnote 705.

⁷⁰⁵ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.17, 30–31.

⁷⁰⁶ It is noteworthy that al-Iṣfahānī has a high regard for al-Kumayt and his poetry, which differs remarkably from the assessment of other compilers, such as al-Jāḥiẓ, Ibn Qutayba, and al-Ṣūlī, who criticize the affectation of his corpus (*takalluf*): Ibn Qutayba, *al-Shiʿr*, 581–584; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, vl.50, 238–239. Furthermore, al-Iṣfahānī mentions more than once that he is the best poet (*ashʿar*) through different reports: al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.17, 5, 23–25, 27–28. This to some extent may contribute to the positive portrayal of al-Kumayt and downplay the accounts of his association with the Umayyads.

Bāqir or Fāṭima bint al-Ḥusayn, because he “did not love them for this life (*aḥbābukum li-l-ākḥira* or *innī lam uḥibbakum li-l-dunyā*).”⁷⁰⁷ On the other hand, al-Iṣfahānī repeatedly reminds his readers of the pardon given to al-Kumayt through three kinds of reports. The first kind of report claims that either al-Bāqir or al-Ṣādiq evoked God’s forgiveness for al-Kumayt, after listening to his Hāshimī poetry; one of the reports is quoted from the special source, Ibn ‘Uqda.⁷⁰⁸ The second kind holds that al-Kumayt’s panegyrics for the Umayyads were sanctioned by al-Bāqir on the pretext of the *taḥiyya* — this narration is also derived from a rare source, Ja‘far al-Ghazzāl.⁷⁰⁹ Finally, the third kind comprises three reports, which are derived from either a rare source, ‘Alī b. Muḥammad, who is mentioned above, or an uncommon source — a book copied by al-Murhibī al-Kūfī.⁷¹⁰ According to ‘Alī b. Muḥammad, the Prophet appeared in the dreams of the narrators and said that God had forgiven al-Kumayt, after either listening to his poetry or forbidding Di‘bal from responding to al-Kumayt’s poetry.⁷¹¹ Similarly, the book of al-Murhibī states that the Prophet thanked and praised al-Kumayt after listening to the latter’s recitation in the narrator’s dream.⁷¹²

By reiterating al-Kumayt’s sincere partisanship and the pardon given to him, al-Iṣfahānī minimizes the effect of his association with the Umayyads and the

⁷⁰⁷ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.17, 22. A report with not exactly the same element but a similar notion states that al-Kumayt’s last words included “*allāhumma Āl Muḥammad*”, which is repeated three times. This, in a sense, marks his devotion to the Banū Hāshim, see: *ibid.*, vl.17, 32–33.

⁷⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, vl.17, 21, 26. At 21, al-Iṣfahānī quotes from Ibn ‘Uqda.

⁷⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, vl.17, 26–27. At 26, al-Iṣfahānī narrates from Ja‘far al-Ghazzāl.

⁷¹⁰ Al-Iṣfahānī found the report in question in a *kitāb bi-khaṭṭ al-Murhibī al-Kūfī*. As the latter appears only three times in the entire *Aghānī*, it is not one of al-Iṣfahānī’s very commonly used sources. For al-Murhibī, who died in the beginning of the second/eighth century, see: al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, indices; Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 130.

⁷¹¹ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.17, 23.

⁷¹² *Ibid.*, vl.17, 23.

much-hated Khālīd al-Qasrī and shifts the focus onto the importance of love for ‘Alī, which brings salvation to his partisans. Two points are particularly notable. First, al-Iṣfahānī resorts to the special, rare, and uncommon sources to repeat these elements.⁷¹³ That is, the repetition is deliberate on the part of al-Iṣfahānī — thus, this kind of repetition should be seen as indicative of his agenda. Secondly, the dream rhetoric, which is a very common *topos* in medieval Arabic literature and in biographical traditions, is used here and is also found in the article about al-Sayyid, as we will see below.⁷¹⁴

5.3.3.2. Al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī

Al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī was a Kaysānī poet, who professed the imamate of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya (d. 81/700–1), his occultation, and his future return as the *mahdī*. In this article, although al-Iṣfahānī ostensibly excuses himself from possible criticism for his inclusion of this controversial Kaysānī poet, al-Iṣfahānī carefully processes his sources to assert, tacitly, a Shī‘ī point of view. That is, al-Iṣfahānī places al-Sayyid’s biography in a framework that redeems al-Sayyid from moral blemishes, such as drinking, and from his perverse sectarian confession, thanks to his love for *ahl al-bayt*. By repeating certain motifs, al-Iṣfahānī redeems his subject through reference to the approval of the Prophet and of Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765). Thus, al-Sayyid’s devotion to ‘Alī and his family are positively evaluated in the *Aghānī*. Furthermore, the repetitive elements also underscore ‘Alī’s legitimacy and merits (*faḍā’il*).

⁷¹³ See footnote 710.

⁷¹⁴ See page 234.

In the profile, al-Iṣfahānī first mentions al-Sayyid's name and his famous grandfather, Yazīd b. Rabīʿa b. al-Mafarrigh, whose reports, according to the compiler, will be treated in due course.⁷¹⁵ Then, al-Iṣfahānī summarises the biography of his subject:

A leading, talented poet. It is said that the three most prolific poets in the Jāhili and Islamic eras are: Bashshār, Abū al-ʿAtāhiyya, and al-Sayyid, because no one could ever collect all the poetry of any of them. However, his [al-Sayyid's] name ceased to be mentioned and his poetry was abandoned because he cursed the Prophet's Companions and wives excessively; he uses it [poetry] to abuse and slander them. Hence, poetry by him of this kind and other [kinds] is avoided and people desert it out of fear and caution. His poetic style is unattainable and incomparable. Not many of his works are known. His poetry includes his eulogy for the Banū Hāshim and defamation of non-Hāshimīs, whom he opposes. Were it not for the fact that his reports belong to this kind [namely, insulting the Companions and the wives of the Prophet] and do not digress from it, we would be obliged to avoid mentioning any of them. Yet since we have made it a condition to include the *akhbār* about each poet we mention, there is no escape for us from quoting the material that we could find about him that is soundest and furthest from reflecting his vilification, in spite of the rarity [of this kind of report].⁷¹⁶

This defensive tone, according to Kilpatrick, is unique within the *Aghānī*: although al-Iṣfahānī claims that al-Sayyid is included in this work only as a result of the condition he stipulates in the preface, the length of the article on al-Sayyid (more than forty pages) suggests that the compiler is in fact less averse to treating this Kaysānī fanatic than he claims.⁷¹⁷ Furthermore, not only the article's length, but also a review of the repetitive elements will add further support to Kilpatrick's view.

⁷¹⁵ The article about Ibn al-Mufarrigh, see: al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.18, 195–227.

⁷¹⁶ *Ibid.*, vl.7, 181–182.

⁷¹⁷ Kilpatrick, *Making*, 107. It should be noted that the profile of this article differs slightly in Manuscript Fe1562; see Appendix Three.

The article comprises the following themes: al-Sayyid's conflict with his Ibādī parents, who attempted to kill him after learning of his Shī'ī tendency; some reports about his physical features; his standing amongst the poets;⁷¹⁸ the allegation (in al-Iṣfahānī's opinion) of his conversion to Imāmī Shī'ism, which will be addressed in detail in the next chapter;⁷¹⁹ the views of critics and the reception of al-Sayyid's poetry;⁷²⁰ his interactions with his patrons, including 'Abbāsīd caliphs, and friends;⁷²¹ his dedication to the panegyrising of the Banū Hāshim;⁷²² and the account of his death.⁷²³ As al-Iṣfahānī remarks at the beginning, al-Sayyid's partisanship is the cause of people's aversion to transmitting his poetry, and a number of comments by prominent critics and poets echo this point. An illustrative example is al-Aṣma'ī's comment: "Were it not for his *madhhab* and what is included in his poetry [that is, slander], I would never rank anyone before him."⁷²⁴ These comments unanimously acknowledge al-Sayyid's poetic achievements, but it is clear that his fanatical love for the Banū Hāshim compromises his wider acceptance by scholars and *ruwāt*.

Although al-Sayyid's partisanship for the Banū Hāshim causes the majority to abandon his poetry, in this article, al-Iṣfahānī juxtaposes and repeats certain reports to weave a narrative that justifies his excessive love for *ahl al-bayt*. This is achieved by reiterating the references to al-Sayyid's *tashayyu*⁷²⁵ and to his Kaysānī belief⁷²⁶

⁷¹⁸ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.7, 182–184.

⁷¹⁹ *Ibid.*, vl.7, 184–186; see 6.3.1 and 6.3.3.

⁷²⁰ *Ibid.*, vl.7, 186–189.

⁷²¹ *Ibid.*, vl.7, 189–200, 202–213.

⁷²² *Ibid.*, vl.7, 200–202.

⁷²³ *Ibid.*, vl.7, 213–215.

⁷²⁴ *Ibid.*, vl.7, 183, 186–189.

⁷²⁵ *Ibid.*, vl.7, 182, 189–190, 198–199, 194, 196, 206. It should be noted that these reports, apart from referring to his sectarian tendency, have little in common.

⁷²⁶ *Ibid.*, vl.7, 187, 190–191, 192. These reports refer to his belief in the return to life (*raj'a*) and the imamate of Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya.

with the juxtaposition of the dream-reports and the salvation element.

The dream-reports, scattered throughout the article, all emphasise the Prophet's approval of al-Sayyid's poetry devoted to *ahl al-bayt*. First of all, his poetic gift was granted with the permission of the Prophet. The young al-Sayyid saw the Prophet in a dream, standing in a garden of salty soil where tall palm trees grew. Next to it was an empty but pleasant and camphor-scented land. The Prophet said to him: "Do you know whose palms these are?" He replied: "No." The Prophet said: "These belong to Imru' al-Qays b. Ḥujr. Uproot them and plant them in this land!" So al-Sayyid did as the Prophet ordered. After waking up, he came to Ibn Sīrīn and told him his dream (*ru'yā*). The interpretation of the dream, according to Ibn Sīrīn, is that al-Sayyid would become a poet like Imru' al-Qays, but he will only compose for pure and honest people (namely, *ahl al-bayt*). Soon, al-Sayyid became a poet.⁷²⁷ Another kind of reports holds that the narrator of the report saw al-Sayyid reciting his poetry for *ahl al-bayt* in front of the Prophet. After waking up, the narrator either became a partisan for 'Alī or became capable of memorizing al-Sayyid's poem and reciting it fluently, despite his inarticulacy (*luthgha*).⁷²⁸

Medieval Islamic literature is rich in dreams, exemplified by the dream manuals of Ibn Sīrīn (d. 110/728), Ibn Abī Dunyā (d. 281/894), and Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889).

⁷²⁷ *Ibid.*, vl.7, 187.

⁷²⁸ *Ibid.*, vl.7, 193; the report relays that Ibrāhīm b. Hāshim al-'Abdī al-Baṣrī met a man at the tomb of al-Riḍā in Ṭūs. The man used be hostile towards 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, but, after he saw the vision in which al-Sayyid recited his poetry to the Prophet, the love for 'Alī took root in his heart. Another report, in 197, says that Zayd b. Mūsā al-Kāẓim saw the Prophet in his dream with a man wearing white clothes sitting in front of him. Then, the Prophet looked at him and said: "O Sayyid, recite your poem, *'Li-Umm 'Amr fī al-Liwā marba'*". The man recited the whole poem, which Zayd learnt by heart in his dream. Zayd b. Mūsā was a bad reciter, often making grammatical errors (*lahhāna radī' al-inshād*), but he never stammered nor made mistakes whenever reciting this poem. For another instance, see: *ibid.*, vl.7, 213.

The most common functions of a dream (*manām*) or a vision (*ru'yā*) are either the foretelling of a future event or the affirmation or legitimization of an act or of one's position. A dream may be delivered from the Devil, but visions of the Prophet are immune to the evil spirits. As is stated in the famous *hadith*, "Whoever sees me in a dream has indeed seen me, for the Devil is incapable of assuming my form."⁷²⁹ Thus, seeing the Prophet in dreams or visions is used to elevate one's status, especially when the subject and the Prophet are both presented in a pleasant condition,⁷³⁰ like al-Sayyid wearing white clothes in one of the dreams.

The meanings of these dreams are explicit. Al-Sayyid's poetry is legitimized by the Prophet. His poetic gift, solely dedicated to "pure and honest people", viz. *Āl al-bayt*, is initiated by the Prophet and the Prophet listens to his recitation of poetry. Furthermore, the effects of his poetry — spawning love for 'Alī and overcoming Zayd b. Mūsā's stammering — all attest to divine approval for both al-Sayyid's poetry and his partisanship.

In a similar vein, the reference to the forgiveness which al-Sayyid attains through his love for 'Alī is repeated. After Fuḍayl al-Rassān (the narrator of the report) had recited al-Sayyid's poem to Ja'far al-Šādiq, the latter asked about al-Sayyid, but was informed of his death. Ja'far said: "May God have mercy on him." Ruḍayl told him

⁷²⁹ Kristen E. Brustad et al., *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition*, ed. Dwight F. Reynolds (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 88–90. For the *ḥadīth* and its variants, see: Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 1076–1077 (2266, 2267, 2268); Ibn Māja, *Sunan Ibn Māja*, ed. Muḥammad F. 'Abd al-Bāqī (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 2003), 880–881, (3900–3905); al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 1337 (6993–6997).

⁷³⁰ Leah Kinberg, "The Legitimization of the *Madhāhib* through Dreams", *Arabica* 32-1(1985): 50–51. For other references to the function of dreams in historiography, see: Julia S. Meisami, "Mas'ūdī and His Reign of al-Amīn: Narrative and Meaning in Medieval Muslim Historiography," in *On Fiction and Adab in Medieval Arabic Literature*, ed. Philip K. Kennedy (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005), 149–175.

that he once saw the poet drinking, yet Ja‘far responded: “It is not too grave a sin for God to forgive it, for a partisan of ‘Alī (*mā khaṭr dhanb ‘inda Allāh an yaghfirahu li-muḥibb ‘Alī*).”⁷³¹ This report echoes another remark from Ja‘far on al-Sayyid’s drinking: “A partisan of ‘Alī never slips on one foot without the other holding steadfast (*inna muḥibb ‘Alī lā tazillu lahu qadam illā tathbutu lahu al-ukhrā*).”⁷³² A similar effect can be observed in another cluster of reports about al-Sayyid’s death.⁷³³ In his final hours, al-Sayyid suffered from urticaria (*sharā*⁷³⁴) and melancholy (*karab*). Upon this, he made an invocation: “God, is this my reward for my love for Muḥammad’s family?” All of a sudden, his pain was relieved.⁷³⁵ Thus, he could atone for the sin of drinking wine and the pang of death could be eased by his partisanship for ‘Alī — a merit that deserves God’s forgiveness and divine intervention.

With the interpolation of the dream-reports and the story of salvation for al-Sayyid, al-Iṣfahānī’s reluctance to address certain reports about al-Sayyid appears less genuine, in concurrence with Kilpatrick’s observations. By reiterating the mercy of God for him and the approval of the Prophet, al-Iṣfahānī renders the article free from the controversy caused by al-Sayyid’s vilification of the Companions and the wives of the Prophet. Moreover, by accentuating the legitimacy and rectitude of partisanship for ‘Alī and his family, al-Iṣfahānī presents al-Sayyid in a positive light.

⁷³¹ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.7, 190.

⁷³² *Ibid.*, vl.7, 198.

⁷³³ *Ibid.*, vl.7, 213–215.

⁷³⁴ Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, s.v. “*sharā*”.

⁷³⁵ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.7, 213–215. The gist of this report is repeated in the last report of the article (at 215): Suffering from depression and a skin disease, which turned his face as black as tar (*qār*), al-Sayyid faced the *qibla* and said: “O the Commander of the Faithful [that is, ‘Alī], do you do this to your partisan (*walīyuka*)?” three times. Then, a white vein appeared on his forehead and expanded and covered his face till the entire face turned white as a full moon.

Moreover, it is notable that al-Iṣfahānī may have sought to do more than redeem al-Sayyid from any criticism. In fact, the compiler, to some extent, also advocates ‘Alī’s legitimacy in some reports. In one of the dream-reports, al-Sayyid recited his poem to the Prophet. When he reaches the line: ‘They said to him [the Prophet]: “If you wish, you would let us know to whom is the destination and sanctuary” (*qālū lahu law shi’ta a’lamtanā ilā man al-ghāya wa-l-mafza*’).’ The Prophet said: “Enough!” He dusted off his hand (*nafaḍa yadahu*) and said: “By God, I had informed them.”⁷³⁶ In other words, the successor to Muḥammad was already designated. The identity of the successor in this context is obviously ‘Alī. This report deserves special attention, because the informant behind it, Muḥammad b. ‘Āṣim, only appears on this one occasion in the *Aghānī* — that is, he is a rare source.⁷³⁷ Furthermore, it is not directly quoted by al-Iṣfahānī. The *isnād* of the report states: *rawā Muḥammad b. ‘Āṣim ‘an Abī Dāwūd al-Mustariq* (Muḥammad b. ‘Āṣim narrates from Abū Dāwūd al-Mustariq). There are two scholars given the name Muḥammad b. ‘Āṣim: Muḥammad b. ‘Āṣim b. ‘Abdallāh al-Thaqafī al-Iṣfahānī (d. 262/875–6)⁷³⁸ and Muḥammad b. ‘Āṣim, who was based in Baghdad.⁷³⁹ The latter’s death date is unknown, but, given his narration from Ḥarīz b. ‘Uthmān, who died in 163/779–80, it is likely that he lived approximately through the last three decades of the eighth century.⁷⁴⁰ His student, Aḥmad b. Manṣūr al-Ramādī, seems to have been born around 182/798–9.⁷⁴¹ Thus, Muḥammad b. ‘Āṣim should have been still alive in the first decade of the ninth century. If we assume that his lifespan was comparable

⁷³⁶ *Ibid.*, vl.7, 213.

⁷³⁷ *Ibid.*, index.

⁷³⁸ Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 3465–3466.

⁷³⁹ Al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, vl.4, 232–233.

⁷⁴⁰ Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 1380.

⁷⁴¹ Al-Ramādī died in al-Rabī‘ al-Ākhar (AH 265), at the age of eighty-three. Hence, based on the *hijrī* calendar, he must have been born around AH182, that is, around 798–799. See: *Ibid.*, 1019–1020.

to that of his student, al-Ramādī, he would have lived up to 235/849–50. In either case, it is impossible for al-Iṣfahānī, who died after 356/967, to quote directly from either Muḥammad b. ‘Āṣim, unless he had lived more than a century, which seems very unlikely.⁷⁴² In other words, al-Iṣfahānī does not have direct access to this narration; the narration from Muḥammad b. ‘Āṣim is not only a rare but also a problematic source, although al-Iṣfahānī does not explicitly say so. Why must al-Iṣfahānī resort to an unusual source, which he uses only once and to which he does not have secure access, while he uses similar accounts throughout the article? Like his use of Muḥammad b. Ḥayyān al-Bāhilī’s report in Abū Sufyān’s article, al-Iṣfahānī’s inclusion of this account, despite the incomplete *isnād*, suggests that this report embodies a view that the compiler considers important and worth mentioning.

The effort to underscore the legitimacy of ‘Alī is also shown in a cluster of reports focusing on his merits. According to these reports, al-Sayyid used to visit al-A‘mash⁷⁴³ to write about the merits of ‘Alī and adapt these ideas into his poetry. One day, at Kunāsa, the caravanserai and public meeting place outside Kūfa, where poetry was recited, al-Sayyid announced: “O people of Kūfa, whoever comes to me with a report about ‘Alī’s merit about which I have not yet composed a poem, I shall give him this horse and what is on me [that is, a new robe he received from an emir]”. So the Kūfans started to relate what they knew about ‘Alī’s merits and al-Sayyid responded each with the poetry that he had composed to illustrate that merit. One man came up and said:

⁷⁴² See 1.1.1.

⁷⁴³ “Al-A‘mash” in *EF*² (C. Brockelmann and Ch. Pellat).

One day, the Commander of the Faithful, ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, decided to ride a horse and put on his clothes. He was about to wear his shoes. He put on one shoe and, when he inclined to the other, an eagle swooped down from the sky and seized it. It hovered with it and then threw it away. From it dropped a huge snake (*aswad*), which then crept into stones. Then, ‘Alī put on the shoe.

Al-Sayyid had not composed a poem on this before, yet he thought for a second and improvised a poem immediately.⁷⁴⁴ The report is about more than al-Sayyid’s poetic talent; it emphasises the merit of ‘Alī — the imam protected by the divine power.

Al-Iṣfahānī’s emphasis of this aspect can be further established in the three subsequent reports, which by and large narrate the same story, but the last one is retold about the Prophet.⁷⁴⁵ By repeating the story of ‘Alī being rescued by an eagle as a separate and independent narration, al-Iṣfahānī asserts that ‘Alī’s miraculous encounter is not only an interlude in al-Sayyid’s report, but a fully established account with its own independent framework. Furthermore, his remark that a similar *ḥadīth* is attributed to the Prophet creates a paralleling effect, elevating ‘Alī’s status to that of the Prophet.⁷⁴⁶ By juxtaposing these reports, al-Iṣfahānī enhances ‘Alī’s merits, which are comparable to the Prophet’s, and thence establishes ‘Alī’s legitimacy.

⁷⁴⁴ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.7, 200–201.

⁷⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, vl.7, 201–202. Instead of ‘Alī’s shoe, it is the Prophet’s shoe that is taken away by the eagle in the last report.

⁷⁴⁶ The eagle-rescue story cannot be fully understood in terms of the miracles (*mu’jizāt*) of the imams, as ‘Alī does not take any initiative to cause the incident itself. Yet it is important to recognize al-Iṣfahānī’s attempt to draw a parallel between the story and that of the Prophet. In a similar manner, the miracles of the imams are associated with the Qur’ānic miracles performed by the prophets in order to reinforce imams’ positions. See: Judith Loebenstein, “Miracles in Šī‘ī Thought: A Case-Study of the Miracles Attributed to Imām Ġa‘far al-Šādiq,” *Arabica* 50-2(2003): 199–244. The version with the Prophet is also found in: Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Ḥusayn al-Bayhaqī, *Kitāb al-Da‘awāt al-kabīr*, ed. Badr b. ‘Abdallāh al-Badr (Kuwait: Mashūrāt Markaz al-Makhtūṭāt wa-l-Turāth wa-l-Wathā’iq, 1993), vl.2, 74–75 (312).

Moreover, like the dream-report, in which the Prophet affirms the fact that he had designated his successor, the two reports in which the eagle rescues ‘Alī and the Prophet respectively without mentioning al-Sayyid are derived from an unusual source — Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Sa‘īd al-Hamadhānī. If he can be identified with Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Sa‘īd b. ‘Uqda, then, for these two narrations, al-Iṣfahānī resorts to the source specialized in the reports about *ahl al-bayt*, as we have discussed in section two (5.2).⁷⁴⁷ If not, then this Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Sa‘īd al-Hamdānī only appears once in the *Aghānī* — this would then constitute use of a rare source.⁷⁴⁸ Either way, it may suggest his attempt to highlight the role of ‘Alī, especially when this cluster of reports ends with the following:

Al-Sayyid heard a *ḥadīth* that, when the Prophet was prostrating, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn climbed onto his back. ‘Umar then said: “What a great mount is yours!” The Prophet replied: “What great riders are they!” Hearing this, al-Sayyid adapts the story into his poem.⁷⁴⁹

The message conveyed in this report is, of course, more than al-Sayyid’s predilection for inserting the merits of *ahl al-bayt* into his poetry and his ability to improvise, but an emphasis on the elevated positions of al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn.⁷⁵⁰

⁷⁴⁷ In the printed edition, the full name of Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Sa‘īd is not given, but, in Manuscript Fe 1562, it is written: Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Sa‘īd b. ‘Uqda. Thus, it is quite likely that these two are the same person. See Appendix Three.

⁷⁴⁸ Fleischhammer opines that it is very likely the two names refer to the same person; see: Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 36–37. If the two are not to be identified, the former’s only appearance in the *Aghānī* would be as the source of these reports: al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, index.

⁷⁴⁹ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.7, 202.

⁷⁵⁰ The reliability of the report is not unquestioningly accepted in the Sunnī tradition; it is an obscure *ḥadīth* (*gharīb*), according to: al-Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmi‘ al-Kabīr*, ed. Bashshār ‘A. Ma‘rūf (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1996), vl.6, 123 (3784). A very similar *ḥadīth* and its variants, however, are well established in the Sunnī *ḥadīth* collection. See: Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vl.4, 876, (10942); al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī, *al-Mustadrak ‘alā al-ṣaḥīḥayn* (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥaramayn, 1997), vl.3, 198–199 (4847); al-‘Askarī, *al-Juz’*, ed. Jāsim b. Muḥammad b. Ḥamūd al-Fajjī, 2nd ed. (Kuwait: Maktabat Ahl

We have reviewed the components of the article on al-Sayyid and its repetitive elements. Although the compiler, in the beginning, seems to apologise for addressing this controversial figure, he actually agrees with the subject's partisanship for *ahl al-bayt*. Furthermore, by repeating and juxtaposing certain reports, al-Iṣfahānī not only justifies partisanship for 'Alī and his family (even in excessive form, as in al-Sayyid's case), but also advocates the legitimacy of 'Alī as the rightful successor to the Prophet. The two articles and their repetitive elements show a Shī'ī tendency. In combination with the use of special and rare sources, the existence of the sectarian agenda and its impact on the editorial activity of al-Iṣfahānī are hard to deny.

Summary

The six articles examined here with regard to their repetitive elements further demonstrate a Shī'ī agenda in the *Aghānī*. Repetition functions as a means of enhancing the negative image of the two subjects ('Alī b. al-Jahm and Khālīd al-Qasrī), to accentuate the importance of love for 'Alī and his family (Abū al-Aswad al-Du'alī and Di'bal) and to underscore the salvation and pardon guaranteed for his partisans (al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī and al-Kumayt). The negative portrayal of the enemies of the Shī'īs is understandable, on the grounds that al-Iṣfahānī was a Shī'ī. This tendency dovetails with al-Iṣfahānī's selection of material, which reveals his inclination to present the enemies of the Shī'īs in an unfavourable light, as we have seen in the articles about Abū Sufyān, Khālīd al-Qasrī, and al-Mughīra b. Shu'ba in section one (5.1). The emphasis on love for 'Alī, his legitimacy or merits, and the salvation for his partisans echoes what is concluded from our investigation of al-

al-Athar, 2005), 42–43 (21); al-Ājirī, *Kitāb al-Sharī'a*, ed. 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar al-Dumayjī (Riyadh: Dār al-Waṭan, 1997), vl.5, 2159–2163 (1646–1652).

Iṣfahānī's use of special and rare sources. Furthermore, the salvation element betrays a particular Shī'ī perspective, which is not uncommon in the early Imāmī literature.⁷⁵¹ In this sense, al-Iṣfahānī no doubt takes a stance as to 'Alī's role in historiography and the legitimacy of his party. Based on what has been discussed in this and previous sections, it is clear that al-Iṣfahānī's stance is tinged with Shī'ī overtones.⁷⁵²

5.4. Al-Iṣfahānī's Comments and Profiles

The previous three sections investigate evidence for al-Iṣfahānī's selection and repetition of material. This section examines his remarks and summaries (the profile of each article) in order to evaluate his Shī'ī agenda and its impact. The articles addressed here comprise the profiles of Khālīd al-Qasrī and al-Muhājir b. Khālīd. Before we start, it should be noted that, despite the utility of the profiles and remarks by al-Iṣfahānī, they should not be viewed as the sole source for how the compiler perceives his work and manipulates his material. As we have seen in the article about al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī, although al-Iṣfahānī ostensibly apologizes for the inclusion of a subject, whose excessive abuse of the Companions may potentially cause discomfort for the readers, he actually has other unstated points to make in that

⁷⁵¹ The notion that the *shī'at 'Alī* is the chosen group that will be given admission to heaven is common among the Imāmīs: Etan Kohlberg, "The Abū Baṣīr Tradition: Qur'ānic Verses on the Merits of the Shī'a," in *Law and Tradition in Classical Islamic Thought: Studies in Honor of Professor Hossein Modarressi*, ed. Michael Cook, Najam Haider, Intisar Rabb, and Asma Sayeed (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 3–19; *idem*, "The Term 'Rāfida in Imāmī Shī'ī Usage,'" *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 99-4(1979): 677–679; Sulaym, *Kitāb*, 137, 145, 154–157, *passim*; al-Ṣaffār, *Baṣā'ir al-darajāt* (Beirut: Sharikat al-A'lamī, 2010), 38, *passim*. An early Imāmī Qur'ānic exegete interprets "*shī'at 'Alī alladhīna an'amta 'alayhim ghayr al-maghḍūb 'alayhim wa-lā al-ḍāllīn*" in the *sūrat al-Fātiḥa* as "*shī'at 'Alī alladhīn an'amta 'alayhim bi-wilāyat 'Alī*"; see: Furāt al-Kūfī, *Tafsīr Furāt al-Kūfī*, ed. Muḥammad al-Kāzīm (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Tārīkh al-'Arabī, 2011), vl.1, 51–52; for other examples, see: 66–69, 90–92, *passim*; al-Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, vl.1, 41.

⁷⁵² Compare this with the Sunnī idea that the only *firqa* that will attain salvation is *ahl al-sunna*: al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq*, 4–11.

article. Likewise, the profiles of the biographies of Abū Sufyān and al-Mughīra seem neither biased nor expressive of an attempt to degrade the subjects, but the analyses show that they are negatively presented. In other words, the usefulness of the profiles and comments penned by al-Iṣfahānī does not undermine but complement the results presented in the previous sections. As we will see below, the profiles and the remarks concur with the findings above and thus buttress the conclusion that the *Aghānī* is more than a book of songs.

5.4.1. Khālīd al-Qasrī

In section one (5.1), we mentioned that the article about Khālīd has a remarkably lengthy profile. In this profile, al-Iṣfahānī provides us with the details of Khālīd's *nasab* and the reason why Khālīd is believed to have not been related to his tribe, the Bajīla. Apart from repudiating Khālīd's noble lineage, al-Iṣfahānī addresses a number of Khālīd's ancestors, including his great-grandfather, Asad b. Kurz, and his grandfather, Yazīd, both of whom converted to Islam at the time of the Prophet.⁷⁵³ The latter is known to have narrated the *ḥadīth* from the Prophet and al-Iṣfahānī offers an example. Asad, during his delegation (*wuḥūd*), asked the Prophet to make invocation for him. The Prophet invokes: "My Lord, make your victory and the victory of your religion in the offspring of Asad b. Kurz." This seemingly positive but tendentious account is immediately rejected by al-Iṣfahānī:

I do not know what to say about this *ḥadīth*, as I hate to deny what is narrated from the Prophet, but it is obvious that, if the Prophet ever made this invocation for him, his son

⁷⁵³ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.22, 7. Here, al-Iṣfahānī alludes to Asad's revenge on a group of Suḥma, but refrains from further details, which he already addressed in his book about the genealogies of Arabs—*Kitāb al-Ta'dīl wa-l-intiṣāf*.

would not have been with Mu‘āwiya at al-Ṣiffīn against ‘Alī, the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him. Nor would his grandson, Khālīd, have cursed him from the pulpit and exceeded to such an extent that it is bad to mention these horrendous reports of him — may God humiliate and curse him. Yet I mention here the thing [namely, this *ḥadīth*] as it was transmitted and whoever fabricates what the Messenger of God, peace be upon him and his family, did not say, they shall be seated in Hell as he [the Prophet] promised.⁷⁵⁴

Apparently, al-Iṣfahānī was not convinced by the validity of the account. Although in a somewhat euphemistic way, al-Iṣfahānī rebuts this *ḥadīth* by condemning its dishonest transmitters to Hell. However, what is more illustrative of al-Iṣfahānī’s stance is that he rejects the *ḥadīth* not on the basis of the *‘ilm al-rijāl*, which evaluates the reliability of the transmitters, but on account of the *matn*: the animosity of Yazīd and Khālīd towards ‘Alī proves this *ḥadīth* to be fabricated. This remark not only emphasises the vices of Khālīd, which, along with the repeated curses, dominate the entire article, but also deprives his forefather of his credibility as the guardian of the Prophetic narrations. Overall, this remark and its connotation agree with the findings derived from the application of redaction criticism. The articulation of the sectarian vision exists not only in al-Iṣfahānī’s comments but also in the profile, which is shown in the article about al-Muhājir.

5.4.2. Al-Muhājir b. Khālīd

This article is placed under the title, “the reports about al-Muhājir b. Khālīd and his genealogy and the reports about his son, Khālīd.” Thus, part of the article addresses Khālīd b. al-Muhājir’s revenge for his uncle, who was poisoned by Mu‘āwiya’s

⁷⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, vl.22, 8.

physician (*ṭabīb*).⁷⁵⁵ However, the article itself hardly refers to al-Muhājir himself, probably because the information about this figure is not abundant.⁷⁵⁶ Rather, the lion's share of the article (three out of seven printed pages) is taken up by al-Muhājir's father, Khālīd b. al-Walīd. Given the source available to al-Iṣfahānī, this disproportionality is understandable.⁷⁵⁷ The reports about Khālīd b. al-Walīd, who played a dominant role in early Islamic history, are much more copious than those about his son.⁷⁵⁸ What is unusual in the profile of this article is that al-Iṣfahānī presents Khālīd b. al-Walīd very positively, despite his awareness of a number of the controversies related to this individual.

After giving the *nasab* of al-Muhājir, al-Iṣfahānī introduces Khālīd b. al-Walīd by highlighting his military feats. He was named by the Prophet as “the Sword of Islam”, after he successfully orchestrated the retreat of the Muslim army from Mu'ta.⁷⁵⁹ He was badly injured at the Battle of Ḥunayn and then healed by the Prophet, who spat on (or blew; *nafatha*) his wounds.⁷⁶⁰ He negotiated the people of al-Ḥīra into the treaty (*ṣulḥ*) by miraculously surviving poison, which he took in the name of God.⁷⁶¹ Despite Khālīd's outstanding contribution to the war against the

⁷⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, vl.16, 147–149. The revenge account is found in other compilations, for instance, al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, vl.10, 209; al-Zubayrī, *Nasab*, 327.

⁷⁵⁶ Al-Iṣfahānī only cursorily refers to al-Muhājir's alignment with 'Alī b. Abī Tālib at the Battle of Ṣiffīn, but he never narrates a report about him: *al-Aghānī*, vl.16, 148; the scattered references to al-Muhājir are found in the biographic entries about his father, Khālīd b. al-Walīd; for instance: al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, vl.10, 211; al-Zubayrī, *Nasab*, 327. This may have resulted from the scarcity of information about al-Muhājir, as the prolific Ibn 'Asākir seems to have very little to contribute: *Tārīkh*, vl.61, 262–265.

⁷⁵⁷ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.16, 145–147.

⁷⁵⁸ Apart from al-Iṣfahānī's sources, mentioned in footnote 764, the information about Khālīd can be easily found in the compilations prior to the *Aghānī*: al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, vl.10, 207–211; *idem*, *Futūḥ*, indices; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Ma'ārif*, indices.

⁷⁵⁹ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.16, 145.

⁷⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, vl.16, 145–146.

⁷⁶¹ *Ibid.*

apostates, al-Iṣfahānī avoids mentioning it because “it is lengthy.”⁷⁶² Al-Iṣfahānī also refers to his participation in the conquests and the Prophetic *ḥadīth*, which highly praises Khālīd such as *nī‘ma al-rajul Khālīd b. al-Walīd* (Khālīd is such a great man).⁷⁶³

With a list of Khālīd b. al-Walīd’s heroic deeds, the article parallels him with his grandson, Khālīd b. al-Muhājir, who displays his virility and bravery by avenging his uncle’s blood, presenting him in a favourable light. The effect is a very positive presentation by the article, whose subject barely plays a role therein. Why is al-Iṣfahānī so eager to portray Khālīd b. al-Walīd in this way, when he knows of the controversies surrounding the Sword of Islam? If we disregard what al-Iṣfahānī’s sources, including Ibn Sa‘d, al-Zubayr b. Bakkār, and al-Ṭabarī, mention concerning Khālīd b. al-Walīd’s crimes which he committed during the expeditions before or after the Prophet’s death,⁷⁶⁴ his awareness of Khālīd’s wrongdoing is attested in the article about ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Alqama, who was killed during Khālīd b. al-Walīd’s raid on the Banū Jadhīma — the massacre, which was initiated by Khālīd b. al-Walīd for the sake of a personal grudge, resulted in the blood money being paid by ‘Alī on behalf of the Prophet.⁷⁶⁵ Moreover, al-Iṣfahānī knows well what Khālīd enacted during the *ridda*, which he deliberately avoids mentioning due to its “length” in this article: Khālīd b. al-Walīd’s controversial marriage to Mālīk’s wife.⁷⁶⁶ Clearly, al-Iṣfahānī knows of the dark side of Khālīd b. al-Walīd, but he chooses only the heroic side, in conjuncture with his son and grandson in this case.

⁷⁶² *Ibid.*, vl.16, 146.

⁷⁶³ *Ibid.*, vl.16, 146–147.

⁷⁶⁴ Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, vl.9, 400–401; vl.5, 26–45; al-Zubayr b. Bakkār, *Jamharat*, vl.1, 492–501; al-Zubayrī, *Nasab*, 320–322; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vl.3, 65–68, 276–280.

⁷⁶⁵ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.7, 216–225.

⁷⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, vl.15, 218–223.

It seems that al-Iṣfahānī had little material about al-Muhājir himself that would enable him to render this partisan of ‘Alī favourably. Thus, he turns to the abundant accounts of his father and skims over the controversial part to present two Khālids, the grandfather and the grandson, in a heroic light. Despite the absence of al-Muhājir himself from the article, al-Iṣfahānī can blend the anonymous al-Muhājir into the aura of the two heroes who occupy the article.⁷⁶⁷

Summary

The profile in the article about al-Muhājir and the remark in the biography of Khālīd al-Qasrī agree with what we have concluded in the previous sections and support the argument that the *Aghānī* is, to some extent, shaped in accordance with al-Iṣfahānī’s sectarian perspective. While al-Iṣfahānī’s critique of the *ḥadīth* in the article about Khālīd explicitly shows how he posits the victory of Islam — that is, it comes through alignment with ‘Alī — the positive portrayal of Khālīd b. al-Walīd has to be interpreted by considering what information about Khālīd and his son, al-Muhājir, was available to al-Iṣfahānī and how he juxtaposes the reports. With the cases established in the previous sections, al-Iṣfahānī’s Shī‘ī reworking of Khālīd’s heroic image is explicable. After all, it is not an article about Khālīd b. al-Walīd, but about his son and grandson, according to the title. Thus, this special emphasis and the deliberate omission of the controversies caused by Khālīd may suggest a particular editorial concern.

⁷⁶⁷ A case parallel to al-Iṣfahānī’s rendering of the reports about al-Muhājir may be found in the article about Zayd al-Khayl, who is positively portrayed and whose son was a partisan of ‘Alī at Ṣiffīn. However, whether or not the positive presentation of Zayd al-Khayl has anything to do with ‘Urwa b. Zayd — the partisan of ‘Alī — is hard to say, given that the narrations about this Jāhili heroic figure generally tend to be favourable, see: al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.17, 177–195; Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *al-Istī‘āb*, vl.1, 334; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd*, vl.2, 376; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Shi‘r*, 286–288.

Conclusion

To recapitulate the key points of this chapter, we have examined ten articles, which, in one way or another reveal a Shīʿī agenda in the *Aghānī*. Depending on the availability of the source material, the length, contents, and structure of each article, the utility of redaction criticism differs. As a result, we have arranged this chapter according to how redaction criticism might be applied and have thus divided the chapter into four sections.

Section one (5.1) presented the articles about Abū Sufyān, Khālīd al-Qasrī, and al-Mughīra b. Shuʿba, where an examination of al-Iṣfahānī's selection of material shows an editorial trend in his work. Al-Iṣfahānī portrays the three subjects — all unpopular amongst the Shīʿīs — in a negative light by excluding the positive or apologetic reports, which were, in all likelihood, available to him. In other words, al-Iṣfahānī's editorial concerns in writing about these three figures centres on a key objective: the villainisation of the enemies of ʿAlī, which points to a Shīʿī agenda in the *Aghānī*.

Section two (5.2) addressed al-Iṣfahānī's use of special and rare sources. The former consist of the unusual corpus of Ibn ʿUqda and the problematic sources, where al-Iṣfahānī is aware of a flawed *isnād*. The latter denotes narrations of informants who each appear once in the *Aghānī* or a few times in a single article only. The use of the special and rare sources has to be understood in its own context. Thus, we have

discussed the corpus of Ibn ‘Uqda and explained its uniqueness, while its utility in relation to the authorial voice is addressed in the following section (5.3). As for the problematic sources, an example is found in the article about Ka‘b b. Mālik. In spite of his awareness of the defect in the *isnād* and the similar account, narrated from ‘Umar b. Shabba, being at his disposal, al-Iṣfahānī includes this report with the *isnād sha’ām* for the sake of the dialogue between ‘Alī and Ka‘b, which underscores the former’s rightfulness and righteousness during the first *fitna*. Likewise, al-Iṣfahānī adduces rare sources to highlight the status of ‘Alī and his descendants in the biographies of al-Kumayt and other articles in section three (5.3). Meanwhile, al-Iṣfahānī quotes from al-Bāhilī in the article about Abū Sufyān to emphasise his hypocrisy on the one hand and, on the other, to articulate his own take on the role of the first caliph, Abū Bakr. Taken together, the examples in this section all illustrate the influence of al-Iṣfahānī’s sectarian tendency.

In section three (5.3), we examined the repetitive elements in the biographies of Khālīd al-Qasrī, ‘Alī b. al-Jahm, Abū al-Aswad al-Du‘alī, Di‘bal, al-Kumayt, and al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī. From these analyses, we concluded that repetition is employed for three purposes: the villainisation of the enemies of the Shī‘īs, the illustration of the importance of love for ‘Alī, and the emphasis on salvation for his partisans. For the first purpose, al-Iṣfahānī reiterates the vices of ‘Alī b. al-Jahm and Khālīd, such as their duplicity and humble origin, in addition to his permanent curses on the latter. Through repetition, he underscores the devotion of Abū al-Aswad and Di‘bal to the Shī‘ī cause, despite the hardship they suffered. Moreover, he repeatedly refers to the salvation of two Shī‘ī poets, al-Sayyid and al-Kumayt, through the utterances of the imams or of the Prophet. Furthermore, in the latter’s case, al-Iṣfahānī also highlights

the legitimacy and special standing of ‘Alī, by quoting Ibn ‘Uqda or a rare source. Overall, al-Iṣfahānī’s editorial activity for the sake of fulfilling these three objectives makes sense on the grounds of his Shī‘ī conviction.

Finally, section four (5.4) discusses the profiles and al-Iṣfahānī’s comments with regard to the articulation of his sectarian perspective. We have reviewed the lengthy profile in the biography of al-Muhājir and a comment in the article about Khālīd al-Qasrī. Al-Iṣfahānī’s critique of the *ḥadīth* narrated from Yazīd b. Asad shows that the victory of Islam, in his view, comes with ‘Alī, not his opponents. In the profile of al-Muhājir, al-Iṣfahānī’s rendering is less explicit. Yet, his blindly positive portrayal of Khālīd b. al-Walīd in this section, despite his awareness of the controversies he caused, can be deemed to be an attempt to place al-Muhājir in a favourable light — the task cannot be performed without the additional material about the two Khālīds, probably because of the lack of source material about al-Muhājir at al-Iṣfahānī’s disposal. Thus, the two examples here also point to al-Iṣfahānī’s agenda.

The four sections, with illustrative examples provided, all support the argument that the *Aghānī* is more than a book of songs. The articulation of a Shī‘ī perspective concerns al-Iṣfahānī in his compilation of the *Aghānī*. The analyses not only confirm the presence of a Shī‘ī agenda, but also yield specific insights into al-Iṣfahānī’s perspective on early Islamic history in some cases. In the next chapter, we will reflect on the implications of the argument that the *Aghānī* is to some extent reshaped in accordance with al-Iṣfahānī’s Shī‘ī agenda. That is, the *Aghānī* offers further insights into al-Iṣfahānī’s Shī‘ī belief, which allow us to pursue the question pending since Chapter One: what kind Shī‘ī was al-Iṣfahānī?

Part Three

Chapter Six: The Book of Songs in New Light

In light of Chapter Five's conclusion that the *Aghānī* was compiled, to some extent, in accordance with al-Iṣfahānī's sectarian vision, the *Aghānī* can be used as a potential source for understanding and reconstructing the religious views of al-Iṣfahānī as a non-Imāmī and non-Zaydī Shī'ī and, presumably, also those of his co-religionists. Al-Iṣfahānī's religious thought can be explicated through three aspects, which will be discussed respectively in three sections: first, the imamate and the 'Alids;⁷⁶⁸ second, the first three caliphs and the Companions; third, the "others", that is, his views on the Imāmīs, Ghulāt, and Sunnīs.

In section one (6.1), we will first examine how al-Iṣfahānī defines the imamate and its requisite qualifications, by studying information about the role of 'Alī and his descendants and the relevant material in the *Maqātil* and the *Aghānī*. The section will show that the idea of the imamate does not feature much in al-Iṣfahānī's thoughts. The title imam is not used with special connotations, as in Imāmī literature. As with al-Iṣfahānī's lukewarm manner towards the Zaydiyya, he never bothers to specify the imamate and its qualifications. However, the exceptional status of the 'Alids is unmistakable, for al-Iṣfahānī reiterates their virtues and the importance of love for them. Nonetheless, his reverence for the 'Alids is not unconditional, as al-Iṣfahānī

⁷⁶⁸ Although al-Iṣfahānī's *Maqātil* covers the offspring of Abū Ṭālib, this chapter only includes the 'Alids, as very limited material on the Ṭālibids is found in the *Aghānī*. Also, given that the purpose of this section is to collect and synthesize material in order to understand al-Iṣfahānī's Shī'ism, an investigation of the 'Alids can effectively show how his religious thought differs from that of other Shī'ī sects.

critiques the ‘Alids who fail to adhere to commendable conduct and rightly guided belief. Without defining the imamate and professing blind adherence to the ‘Alids, al-Iṣfahānī’s Shī‘ism is free from requiring commitment to any particular ‘Alid, regardless of the latter’s political agenda. On the other hand, with the emphasis on love for the ‘Alids, al-Iṣfahānī and his co-religionists can maintain a Shī‘ī identity without melting into the Sunnī majority.

In section two (6.2), a review of al-Iṣfahānī’s treatment of the first three caliphs and the Companions in the *Aghānī* and in the relevant passages in the *Maqātil* suggests that al-Iṣfahānī’s Shī‘ī belief is built upon love for the virtuous members of the *ahl al-bayt*, without marring the reputation of the Companions, with the exception of those who oppose ‘Alī and oppress his partisans. In this regard, al-Iṣfahānī’s stance towards the Companions resembles that of the so-called Batrīs; their beliefs, however, especially in their ritual aspects, he finds disagreeable.⁷⁶⁹ Due to this neutral stance vis-à-vis the Companions, especially the first three caliphs, al-Iṣfahānī’s Shī‘ism also accepts the Sunnīs’ narrations and, presumably, was more acceptable to the Sunnīs.

Section three (6.3) investigates how al-Iṣfahānī draws the line between his Shī‘ism and the beliefs of others, Shī‘īs or not. He not only differs from the Imāmīs on the issue of the imamate, but also rejects the accounts imbued with their propaganda, which endorse the thaumaturgic power of the imams. As for the Ghulāt, al-Iṣfahānī regards their beliefs as repugnant and stupid. For al-Iṣfahānī, they are no different from heretics who ought to be persecuted. In contrast, al-Iṣfahānī does not directly

⁷⁶⁹ See footnote 648.

reveal his opinion about the Sunnīs, but he portrays those who disrespect ‘Alī and his family less positively, as shown in the articles about ‘Abdallāh b. Muṣ‘ab and ‘Alī b. al-Jahm. Furthermore, his portrayal of al-Sayyid, when compared with the treatment of the Sunnī scholars, shows his assertion of this sectarian perspective.

6.1. The ‘Alids without the Imamate

In both the *Maqātil* and the *Aghānī*, the term imam rarely appears. This is not surprising in the *Aghānī*, given its genre and contents, but it seems quite unusual for a text like the *Maqātil*. Unlike Imāmī or Zaydī compilers, al-Iṣfahānī never presents the term, imam, as a unique title.⁷⁷⁰ For him, imam either denotes the person who leads at prayer or is synonymous with the caliph.⁷⁷¹ Neither does he ascribe this title to the virtuous ‘Alids, including Zayd b. ‘Alī.⁷⁷² The imamatology’s absence from his work marks a vivid contrast between al-Iṣfahānī and his Imāmī and Zaydī contemporaries, who hold the imams as bearers of knowledge and consider obedience to them to be obligatory.⁷⁷³

Nonetheless, his lack of imamatology does not undermine the role of the ‘Alids. Al-

⁷⁷⁰ Crone, *Medieval*, 101–105, 110–111; al-Kulaynī, *Uṣūl*, vl.1, 116–117; al-Nāṭiq, *al-Ifāda*, 17.

⁷⁷¹ For instance, al-Ḥasan was the imam in the sense that he was the commander of the faithful before his retirement: al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 70. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī is literally the imam of the mosque of Kūfa: *idem*, *al-Aghānī*, vl.17, 26–27.

⁷⁷² *Idem*, *Maqātil*, 124–145; other examples such as Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim, al-Nafs al-Zakiyya, and his father, ‘Abdallāh b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥasan, are all described as virtuous men, but no one is entitled imam: 167, 206–207, 464–465.

⁷⁷³ Al-Nāṭiq, *al-Ifāda*, 17: *al-a`imma al-hādīn alladhīna awjaba Allāh ṭā`atahum wa-farada `alā madhhab al-Zaydiyya i`tiqād imāmatahum*. Al-Saffār, *Baṣā`ir*, 31–32, 66–67, 80–86, 89–91, 94–97; al-Mufīd, *al-Āmālī*, ed. ‘Alī A. al-Ghifārī (Beirut: Dār al-Tayyār al-Jadīd, ND), 68–69, 75–78, *passim*.

Iṣfahānī retains his Shī'ī affinity by elevating the status of 'Alī and his family in two ways: first, by demeaning his enemies and those of his family; second, by enumerating his merits. In Chapter Five, we have established through redaction criticism that al-Iṣfahānī portrays the enemies of Shī'īs negatively, as shown in the articles about Khālīd al-Qasrī and 'Alī b. al-Jahm, for example. With the exception of al-Nu'mān b. Bashīr and Ibn Mu'tazz, those who harbour enmity towards 'Alī are either villainised or cursed by al-Iṣfahānī.⁷⁷⁴ A plausible editorial intervention may support al-Iṣfahānī's deliberate defence for 'Alī's dignity. The protagonists of the report, 'Umar and Ibn 'Abbās, recall the Saqīfa event and the former says to the latter: "The first who delayed you from this matter [that is, the caliphate] is Abū Bakr. Your tribesmen hate to combine the caliphate and the prophethood in you [the Banū Hāshim]." At this point, al-Iṣfahānī interrupts the narrative and states: "It is a long story, not suitable here, so I dropped it" and turns to their discussion of the poetry of Zuhayr b. Abī Sulmā.⁷⁷⁵ As a matter of fact, it does not seem to be a very long story. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd quotes a lot from al-Iṣfahānī's source, Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Jawharī, who compiled a *Kitāb al-Saqīfa*, and also mentions the report in question.⁷⁷⁶ According to Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, after 'Umar uttered this sentence, Ibn 'Abbās asked him why. 'Umar replied: "If they did so [combine the caliphate and the prophethood], you would have the tyrannical power over them (*law fa'alū la-kuntum 'alayhim jahfan jahfan*)."⁷⁷⁷ While al-Iṣfahānī may have meant to present the narrative concisely, it is also plausible that he does not agree with the view that 'Alī

⁷⁷⁴ Apart from Khālīd al-Qasrī, discussed in Chapter Five (pages 186, 219 and 243), another example of al-Iṣfahānī's curse on an enemy of 'Alī is found in the article about 'Imrān b. Ḥiṭṭān: *al-Aghānī*, vl.18, 85, 87. 'Imrān b. Ḥiṭṭān is not included in our analysis, due to his Khārījī affiliation and the fact that Khārījism was despised by both Sunnīs and Shī'īs.

⁷⁷⁵ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.10, 238–239.

⁷⁷⁶ On al-Jawharī, see Appendix Four and 3.1.

⁷⁷⁷ Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ nahj al-balāgha*, ed. Muḥammad Ibrāhīm (Baghdad: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 2007), vl.1, 260.

could ever possibly have acted like a tyrant — the idea is unacceptable within his Shī'ism.⁷⁷⁸

Likewise, al-Iṣfahānī scatters references to 'Alī's merits throughout the *Aghānī*. We have discussed the techniques (the use of repetition, the juxtaposition of reports, and the selection of material) al-Iṣfahānī employs to achieve this purpose in Chapter Five.⁷⁷⁹ Besides these, 'Alī is given a privileged role in the *Aghānī*, when compared with the other three caliphs. While Abū Bakr and 'Uthmān are hardly mentioned in the *Aghānī*,⁷⁸⁰ 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb takes up more space in the *Aghānī* due to his association with a number of the poets.⁷⁸¹ However, 'Umar's role is incomparable with that of 'Alī, who plays jurist and exhorter in numerous reports.⁷⁸²

The article about the demise of 'Ubaydallāh b. 'Abbās's sons also highlights 'Alī's superiority. The two sons of 'Ubaydallāh b. 'Abbās were killed by the troops led by

⁷⁷⁸ Although it is possible that the narration available to Ibn Abī Ḥadīd (based on its written form) is different from that available to al-Iṣfahānī (who accesses to al-Jawharī's report through oral transmission), whose report is combined with discussion of the poetry, it seems unlikely that the main components in the report may have changed, especially the dialogue between Ibn 'Abbās and 'Umar. If they were loosely put together, al-Iṣfahānī could have just omitted the latter. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd read al-Jawharī's *Kitāb al-Saqīfa* via Ibn Abī Zayd al-'Alawī al-Ḥusaynī in 610/1213–4; see: *ibid.*; al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.1, 257. See also the comparison of two texts in Appendix Six.

⁷⁷⁹ See, particularly, the biographies of al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī, Abū al-Aswad al-Du'alī, Di'bal, al-Kumayt, and Ka'b b. Mālik, discussed in Chapter Five; apart from the selection of material, the use of repetitive elements, and the arrangement, which have been analyzed by redaction criticism, there is one example in which al-Iṣfahānī juxtaposes a number of sources in order to insert a reference to 'Alī's intelligence: al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.1, 72–73.

⁷⁸⁰ We have discussed 'Uthmān's role in the biographies of al-Walīd b. 'Uqba and Nā'ila in 4.3. In the article about Abū Zubayd, 'Uthmān was one of the audiences of the horror story about the subject's encounter with a lion: al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.10, 97–100. However, more often than not, 'Uthmān is only referred to in a walk-on role, in contexts like appointing someone to a post or someone doing something during his caliphate: al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, index. Similarly, Abū Bakr hardly features in any important role, although his knowledge of poetry and genealogy is mentioned: al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.4, 116–117; vl.14, 213; vl.17, 49; vl.22, 219; index.

⁷⁸¹ For instance, al-Ḥuṭay'a, 'Amr b. Ma'dikarib, Nābigha, Zuhayr b. Abī Sulmā and Labīd: *ibid.*, vl.2, 124, 126; vl.3, 60; vl.4, 117–118; vl.8, 189; vl.11, 5–6; vl.15, 156–157, 163, 269; vl.16, 52–55; vl.22, 220; index.

⁷⁸² *Ibid.*, vl.5, 95; vl.13, 15; vl.16, 69–70, 74–75; vl.17, 262; vl.19, 13–14; index.

Busr b. Arṭa', who was sent by Mu'āwiya to different regions to kill any Shī'ī they found and invade 'Alī's territory. After arriving in Najrān, Busr b. Arṭa' slaughtered 'Ubaydallāh's sons and then returned to Syria.⁷⁸³ At this juncture, the narrative is interrupted and two reports are inserted. The first records 'Alī's *khuṭba* to the Kūfans after hearing of the raids by the Syrians.⁷⁸⁴ The second mentions correspondence between 'Alī and his brother, 'Aqīl.⁷⁸⁵ The *khuṭba* and the correspondence illustrate the rectitude and legitimacy of 'Alī. In the *khuṭba*, the Syrians were portrayed as stray and false people (*al-qawm 'alā ḍalālātihim wa-bāṭilihim*). 'Alī, in his reply, told 'Aqīl to leave the Quraysh to pursue error and wander in discord (*da 'Qurayshan wa-tarkāḍahum fī al-ḍalāla wa-tajwālihim fī al-shiqāq*), as "they were determined to fight your brother, as they were determined to fight the Prophet before; they became ignorant of his right and denied his superiority."⁷⁸⁶ Further, the desertion of his followers did not anguish 'Alī at all, because he was "the rightful one and God was with the rightful (*li-annī muḥiqq wa-Allāhi ma'a al-ḥaqq wa-ahlihi*)."⁷⁸⁷ Thus, the *khuṭba* and the correspondence repeatedly underscore the falsehood of 'Alī's adversaries; that is, 'Alī is the legitimate successor and fighting against him is the equivalent of fighting against the Prophet. After these two interposed accounts, the article turns back to its main narrative. When 'Alī received the news that 'Abd al-Raḥmān and Qutham, the sons of 'Ubaydallāh, had been killed, he was deeply agonized and called the curse of God upon Busr: "My Lord, take his religion away from him and do not let him leave this life without taking his

⁷⁸³ *Ibid.*, vl.16, 204.

⁷⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, vl.16, 205–206.

⁷⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, vl.16, 206–208.

⁷⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, vl.16, 205, 207.

⁷⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, vl.16, 208.

reason away.⁷⁸⁸ As the result of this invocation, Busr indeed became insane and remained so until his death.⁷⁸⁹

The account of the death of the sons does not significantly differ from what is related in other compilations and Busr's atrocity is well-attested.⁷⁹⁰ However, al-Iṣfahānī's juxtaposition of the reports is unusual. The reports on the *khuṭba* and correspondence, illustrating the legitimacy of 'Alī and his adherence to the truth (*al-ḥaqq*), are sandwiched within the main narrative account. Although other compilers, such as al-Balādhurī and Ibn A'tham, also mention the *khuṭba* of 'Alī, none of them connects it with the correspondence.⁷⁹¹ While 'Alī's rightfulness and righteousness are emphasised, the role of 'Alī is further highlighted by the effect of his curse.⁷⁹² The special status of 'Alī is accentuated not only by the contents of the reports — 'Alī is rightly guided and there was a response to his invocation — but also by the fact that his *khuṭba* and *risāla* are included, whereas nothing of the kind from the other three caliphs is found in the *Aghānī*.⁷⁹³ Clearly, 'Alī is the most virtuous, in al-Iṣfahānī's view.

The same privilege is extended to his descendants. The descendants of 'Alī enjoy a higher standing, solely on the basis of kinship, as illustrated in Ash'ab's surprise

⁷⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, vl.16, 208–209.

⁷⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹⁰ Ibn Qutayba, *al-Ma'ārif*, 122; Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, vl.6, 347, 539–540; Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *al-Istī'āb*, vl.1, 100–105; Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Iṣāba*, vl.1, 540–542; Ibn 'Asākir, *Tārīkh*, vl.10, 144–156; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vl.5, 139.

⁷⁹¹ Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-Futūḥ*, vl.3, 236–238; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, vl.3, 214. A *khuṭba* and correspondence similar to what appears in the *Aghānī* are found in: al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abduh (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Ma'ārif, 1990), 135–140, 595–597.

⁷⁹² 'Alī's invocation is also mentioned by: al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj*, vl.3, 163.

⁷⁹³ Although there is correspondence between 'Uthmān and his governor and some reports about 'Umar's exhortations, nothing that highlights their virtues is comparable to the reports given about 'Alī: al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.4, 246; vl.22, 221–222.

when he sees a Zubayrī sitting by the pillar (where the masters or *shaykhs* are to be seated) and an ‘Alawī in front of him.⁷⁹⁴ ‘Abdallāh b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥasan commanded the respect of the Umayyad Medinan governor and was called “the son of the Prophet.”⁷⁹⁵ Moreover, all the Hāshimīs have the power of intercession (*al-shafā’a*), according to ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz.⁷⁹⁶ There is no need to repeat the point about the importance of love for the *ahl al-bayt*, which will bring salvation in return, as it is addressed in Chapter Five.⁷⁹⁷ Suffice to say that the ‘Alids occupy far more space in the *Aghānī* than any other lineage descended from the first three caliphs, but they are certainly not as ubiquitous as the Umayyads and the ‘Abbāsids.⁷⁹⁸

That said, morality, more so than their genealogy, constitutes an important source of this dignity of the ‘Alids.⁷⁹⁹ An ‘Alid, however prominent his lineage might be, is treated with contempt by al-Iṣfahānī if he does not emulate the commendable deeds of his ancestor. As stated in the preface to the *Maqātil*, al-Iṣfahānī limits his work to the reports of the Ṭālibid “who is praiseworthy in conduct and righteous in belief” and excludes the one “who is opposite to that and deviates from the way of his family and from the ways (*madhāhib*) of his forefathers or who revolts in a devastating and corrupt manner.”⁸⁰⁰ The idea of “meritocracy” in relation to the privileged status of the ‘Alids is embodied in al-Nafs al-Zakiyya’s exhortation to al-

⁷⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, vl.3, 238–239.

⁷⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, vl.6, 85–86; the article about ‘Abdallāh b. al-Ḥasan is full of his virtues and merits: vl.21, 92–101. See also: al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 166–171.

⁷⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, vl.9, 218–219. Other instances: *ibid.*, vl.7, 185, 202; vl.9, 183; see also the articles about the ‘Alids: *ibid.*, vl.16, 282–292; vl.22, 162–264.

⁷⁹⁷ In particular, 5.3.2 and 5.3.3.

⁷⁹⁸ With the exclusion of the names in the *isnāds*, the ‘Alids occupy a considerable part of the *Aghānī*, but the Umayyads and the ‘Abbāsids, as patron of musicians and poets, appear throughout the work. Furthermore, the second part of the *Aghānī* centres on the musicians in the caliphal families, see 2.2.

⁷⁹⁹ See Appendix One.

⁸⁰⁰ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 24–25.

Ḥusayn b. Zayd: the good is to imitate the conduct of the ancestor (*al-salaf*).⁸⁰¹ Al-Iṣfahānī has no compunction about showing his aversion to the cruelty and heretical tendencies of Ibn Mu‘āwiya.⁸⁰² In accordance with his compiling principle, he refuses to narrate from the reports about Ismā‘īl b. Yūsuf, whose revolt in the Ḥijāz caused high casualties amongst the pilgrims and caused the inhabitants to perish from hunger and thirst.⁸⁰³ The ethical requirement also implies al-Iṣfahānī’s rejection of the Zaydī idea (or the idea attributed to Zaydīs) that all the members of the *ahl al-bayt*, regardless of age, share the knowledge (‘*ilm*) equally, without being taught — the knowledge is sown into their chests.⁸⁰⁴ That is, the ‘Alids ought to imitate the morality of their ancestor and some are apparently inferior to others, in al-Iṣfahānī’s view.

In summary, it seems that in al-Iṣfahānī’s Shī‘ism, the imamate is not indispensable. He leaves no clue as to how he defines the imamate and the criteria for candidates in the *Aghānī* and the *Maqātil*. Moreover, he never formally calls any of the ‘Alids imam. Despite his reverence for a number of the ‘Alids, their virtues are either described or exemplified in the reports, but they are not given this title. Nonetheless, ‘Alī occupies a prominent place in the *Aghānī*, while his merits are so numerous that al-Iṣfahānī holds them to be uncountable in the *Maqātil*.⁸⁰⁵ Likewise, the ‘Alids are presented in a favourable light. An examination of al-Iṣfahānī’s treatment of ‘Alī and his descendants shows that, in spite of their lack of the imamate and its semi-divine attributes, the ‘Alids enjoy a privileged status based on their kinship and their

⁸⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 332–333.

⁸⁰² See 6.3.2.

⁸⁰³ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 524; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vl.9, 346–347; al-Mas‘ūdī, *Murūj*, vl.4, 94–95.

⁸⁰⁴ Al-Nawbakhtī and al-Qummī, *Firaq*, 70–71; al-Nāshī, *Masā’il*, 42–43.

⁸⁰⁵ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 43.

morality. Any member of the ‘Alids deserves respect from al-Iṣfahānī (and, presumably, his co-religionists), as long as he is virtuous. This moral criterion, which constitutes one of al-Iṣfahānī’s ways of evaluating the Ṭālibids, suggests that his Shī‘ī belief does not entail venerating any ‘Alid who claims political or religious authority. Rather, the ‘Alids are given respect only when they prove themselves worthy of it. We have identified al-Iṣfahānī’s religious thought regarding the imams and ‘Alids; now, let us turn to his views on the first three caliphs and the Companions.

6.2. The Successors to Muḥammad and His Companions

Although Abū Bakr and ‘Uthmān are more or less walk-ons in the *Aghānī*, there are hints as to al-Iṣfahānī’s perspective on the first three caliphs. In Chapter Five, it has been noted that al-Iṣfahānī inserts a rare source into the article about Abū Sufyān in order to emphasise that Abū Bakr is the rightful successor, from ‘Alī’s perspective: “Indeed, we found Abū Bakr to be the right person for this [the caliphate]”.⁸⁰⁶ Thus, ‘Alī’s relationship with Abū Bakr (and ‘Umar, by extension) is not nearly as tense as some Imāmī Shī‘ī historiography presents it.⁸⁰⁷ Hence, the first two caliphs are acceptable. Apart from this, al-Iṣfahānī’s opinion of Abū Bakr (whether he was a just caliph, for instance) is not known, as the latter only plays a marginal role in the *Aghānī*. On the other hand, ‘Umar receives more attention by virtue of his encounters with a number of the *Aghānī*’s biographees. ‘Umar is not always portrayed in a

⁸⁰⁶ Page 213.

⁸⁰⁷ Whether al-Ya‘qūbī’s was an Imāmī remains disputed, but his portrayal of the Saqīfa event illustrates the tension between ‘Alī (as well as his *shī‘a*) and Abū Bakr (and his supporters). See footnote 649; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, vl.2, 259–272; al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *al-Shāfi fī al-imāma*, ed. ‘Abd al-Zahrā’ al-Ḥ. al-Khaṭīb (Tehran: Mu’assasat al-Ṣādiq, 2006), vl.3, 239–245.

positive light; as we have seen in the article about al-Mughīra b. Shu‘ba, his judgment and justice are called into question.⁸⁰⁸ However, there are also positive accounts about the second caliph. ‘Umar is presented as a poetry critic, who gives his views on poets or verses from time to time within the *Aghānī*.⁸⁰⁹ His *ḥikma* (wise utterances), as well as prophetic *ḥadīth* on his authority, are mentioned.⁸¹⁰ More than that, a *ḥadīth* which he narrates is quoted by al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī as the evidence of the respect for the inviolability of marriage: no one should separate a couple and intervene in their marriage.⁸¹¹ That is to say, ‘Umar’s role (and, by analogy, that of Abū Bakr) as transmitter of the prophetic traditions is acknowledged, with the endorsement of al-Ḥusayn. In other words, just as Abū Bakr’s caliphate is regarded as legitimate, the credibility of ‘Umar is accepted, in spite of his partiality in the case of al-Mughīra’s adultery.

As for the more controversial caliph, ‘Uthmān, al-Iṣfahānī’s reliance on a problematic source in the biography of Ka‘b b. Mālīk shows his attempt to highlight ‘Uthmān’s wrongfulness — his nepotism: “‘Uthmān monopolized [the wealth of all Muslims] excessively.”⁸¹² However, like ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān is not always portrayed negatively. In the case of Abū Sufyān, there is a report relating that ‘Uthmān, the caliph, rebuked Abū Sufyān, who advised him to catch the caliphate quickly as if he were catching a ball (*talaqqafūhā baynakum talaqquf al-kurra*).⁸¹³ As mentioned

⁸⁰⁸ Page 198–202.

⁸⁰⁹ On Ḥassān b. Thābit’s poetry, see: al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.4, 117–118; on Zuhayr b. Abī Sulmā: vl.10, 249–250; on al-Nābigha: vl.11, 5–6; other examples: vl.22, 70, 220.

⁸¹⁰ *Ibid.*, vl.4, 246; vl.9, 228; vl.12, 240–241.

⁸¹¹ *Ibid.*, vl.9, 154–155.

⁸¹² See page 210.

⁸¹³ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.6, 273.

before, al-Iṣfahānī has enough material about Abū Sufyān's hypocrisy.⁸¹⁴ Were he trying to villainise ʿUthmān, he would not have needed to mention this. It is not necessary, as many reports of this kind have been narrated beforehand, and it is less negative in its portrayal of ʿUthmān. Likewise, on the accusation of drinking against al-Walīd b. ʿUqba, al-Iṣfahānī presents two versions of the story of ʿUthmān's reaction: he either punishes his half-brother on his own initiative or tries to quash the accusation.⁸¹⁵ Al-Iṣfahānī's inclusion of the more apologetic version might suggest a less critical view of the third caliph. Yet the inclusion of negative reports speaks to his criticism, too.

Based on what has been discussed above, it seems that al-Iṣfahānī acknowledges the first three caliphs, despite their moral defects (ʿUmar's partiality and ʿUthmān's nepotism). Furthermore, their positive sides are included. As al-Iṣfahānī does not show an explicit enmity towards the three caliphs, he distances himself from the standpoint of the Imāmī Shīʿīs and the position ascribed to the Jārūdī Shīʿīs, who deem the first three caliphs infidels for having usurped the caliphate of ʿAlī.⁸¹⁶

In correlation with this, al-Iṣfahānī upholds a Sunnī-like attitude towards the Companions. Except for Abū Sufyān and al-Mughīra, an ideological and an actual enemy of ʿAlī, al-Iṣfahānī's treatment of the Companions is not very different from that by his Sunnī counterparts. Whenever his Companion-subjects happen to transmit the Prophetic *ḥadīth*, al-Iṣfahānī lists a few examples. The contents of the exemplary

⁸¹⁴ *Ibid.*, vl.6, 273; see page 186 and 212.

⁸¹⁵ *Ibid.*, vl.5, 93–96.

⁸¹⁶ Etan Kolberg, "Some Imāmī Shīʿī Views on the *Ṣaḥāba*," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 5 (1984): 143–175; Lucas, *Constructive*, 221–285. On Jārūdīs, see: al-Ashʿarī, *Maqālāt*, vl.1, 141.

aḥādīth vary, but the very fact that al-Iṣfahānī has this kind of material in his notebooks indicates that he has no objection to the *aḥādīth* of the Companions who did not align with ‘Alī, such as al-Nu‘mān b. Bashīr and Ka‘b b. Mālīk.⁸¹⁷

This can be buttressed by the *waṣīyya* (will) of ‘Alī mentioned in the *Maqātil*. The *waṣīyya*, which ‘Alī is said to have written on paper, begins with ‘Alī’s *tashahhud* and then moves to the exhortations, for example, to piety (*taqwā Allāh*), care for kin and the poor, and adherence to the obligatory rituals (*al-ṣalāt*, *al-zakāt*, *al-ṣiyām*, and *al-ḥajj*).⁸¹⁸ One of the exhortations reminds the reader of his *waṣīyya*, including his sons, family, and whoever reads his *waṣīyya*, of the importance of the Companions (*Allāh fī aṣḥāb nabīkum*), who are the executors of the will of the Prophet.⁸¹⁹ This version of ‘Alī’s *waṣīyya* marks a contrast with the Imāmī version, which excludes the Companions who caused sedition and those who offered asylum to the former (*al-muḥdith* and *al-mu’wī li-l-muḥdith*).⁸²⁰ The dignity of the Companions should be respected, but al-Iṣfahānī’s view on the range of the Companions who deserve reverence differs from that of his Imāmī counterparts. Compared with the latter, ‘Alī’s *waṣīyya* in the *Maqātil* displays a more lenient manner towards the Companions.

His acceptance of sources on the authority of Ibn Sa‘d and al-Ṭabarī illustrates this.

While al-Ṭabarī’s accounts form the backbone of al-Iṣfahānī’s presentation of the

⁸¹⁷ Al-Iṣfahānī is not a *ḥadīth* scholar; neither is he interested in jurisprudence. However, he certainly does not take the prophetic corpus lightly, as shown in his comment in the article about Khālīd al-Qasrī: *akrahu an ukadhdhiba bi-mā ruwiya ‘an rasūl Allāh*. That is, the *akhbār* are not equal to the prophetic *aḥādīth* and the random evaluation of its authenticity may be profane, in his view.

⁸¹⁸ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 51–53.

⁸¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 52.

⁸²⁰ Ibn Bābawayh, *Man lā yaḥḍuruhu al-faqīh*, ed. Ḥusayn al-A‘lamī (Beirut: Mu’assasat al-A‘lamī, 1986), vl.4, 143–146.

sīra, al-Iṣfahānī's portrayal of the Companions does not differ from that in other compilations. We have considered the examples of Ḥassān b. Thābit, Ka'b b. Mālik, and al-Walīd b. 'Uqba: the merits of the first two are admitted, while the vices of al-Walīd are well-noted by Sunnī compilers.⁸²¹ In other words, al-Iṣfahānī's historical memory regarding the Companions does not differ significantly from that of the Sunnīs. His acknowledgement of the authority of the Companions also means that he can resort to a broader spectrum of non-Shī'ī sources as evidence to validate points. Through the utterances of the renowned jurists and *ḥadīth* scholars, such as Mālik b. Anas and Ibn 'Abbās, the recitation of *ghazal* poetry and the legality of the music are approved.⁸²² That is, the *Aghānī* is imbued with al-Iṣfahānī's Shī'ī perspective, but this Shī'ī past can be reconstructed through non-Shī'ī sources, where appropriate.

This epistemology, in relation to the history of early Islam, not only allows al-Iṣfahānī to use non-Shī'ī sources — which, in return, offer legal *dalā'il* for music and poetry, the *raison d'être* of the book of songs — but also widens the audience able to accept his version of the stories. As the *Aghānī* is not dominated by the *tashayyu' qabīḥ*, with curses upon the first two caliphs and the Companions who failed to support 'Alī, it is accepted by later Sunnī compilers. With the exception of Ibn al-Jawzī, the Sunnī compilers of later period seem to have received the *Aghānī* positively, using it either as a source or as a template for their own abridgments.⁸²³

⁸²¹ See Chapter Four. Other examples include Zayd al-Khayl; see: footnote 767; 'Amr b. Ma'dikarib, in *al-Aghānī*, vl.15, 152–178; Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *al-Istī'āb*, vl.2, 107–109; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd*, vl.4, 261–263; Labīd in *al-Aghānī*, vl.15, 263–276; *al-Istī'āb*, vl.2, 189–191; *Usd*, vl.4, 482–485; Abū Miḥjan al-Thaqfī in *al-Aghānī*, vl.19, 5–14; *al-Istī'āb*, vl.2, 459–463; *Usd*, vl.6, 271–272; Ka'b b. Zuhayr in *al-Aghānī*, vl.17, 62–69; *al-Istī'āb*, vl.2, 175–177; *Usd*, vl.4, 449–451.

⁸²² Kilpatrick, *Making*, 251–254; al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.1, 73–79, 100, 127–128; vl.2, 168; vl.4, 175.

⁸²³ Those that authored the abridgments of the *Aghānī* includes Sunnī and Ismā'īlī compilers; see: Kilpatrick, *Making*, 33; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.14, 185; see also footnote 53.

Following the conclusion of section one (6.1), al-Iṣfahānī's loyalty to 'Alī and his family is beyond doubt, but his partisanship is based on conditional love for the virtuous members of the family — each 'Alid has to follow the good conduct of his ancestor before he can win al-Iṣfahānī's respect. Without an imamatology, al-Iṣfahānī's Shī'ism is pragmatic in the sense that he is not committed to the authority of any 'Alid, his deputy, or his clerical representative. While holding tenaciously to the view that 'Alī is the most rightly-guided and virtuous one, al-Iṣfahānī also acknowledges the first three caliphates, albeit not without critiques, and the authority of the Companions. Thus, he can avail himself of non-Shī'ī sources, which supply varied information required for his *Aghānī*. At the same time, the past that he reconstructs in accordance with his sectarian perspective is accepted by a wider spectrum of his audience.

However, this does not necessarily mean that al-Iṣfahānī deliberately panders to the Sunnīs (the *niyya* is known to God alone). Al-Iṣfahānī still differs from the Sunnīs in his reception of poets of various convictions. It is to otherisation in al-Iṣfahānī's Shī'ī ideology that we now turn.⁸²⁴

6.3. Seeing the “Others” from the Perspective of a non-Imāmī and non-Zaydī Shī'ī

This section examines how al-Iṣfahānī perceives others through the lens of his specific Shī'ī *Weltanschauung*. The first subsection (6.3.1) looks at al-Sayyid al-

⁸²⁴ The otherisation engineered by al-Iṣfahānī corresponds to Said's usage: 'In other words, this universal practice of designating in one's mind a familiar space which is “ours” and an unfamiliar space beyond “ours” which is “theirs” is a way of making geographical distinctions that *can be* entirely arbitrary...To a certain extent modern and primitive societies seem thus to derive a sense of their identities negatively...' in *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Books, 1978), 54 and *passim*.

Ḥimyarī's conversion with regard to the Imāmī discourse behind it. It has been shown that al-Iṣfahānī does not comply with the Imāmīs in terms of his imamatology, the role of the first three caliphs, and the authority of the Companions. This subsection argues that al-Iṣfahānī not only passively distances himself from the Imāmīs but also actively engages in polemic against their propaganda.

The second subsection (6.3.2) investigates al-Iṣfahānī's treatment of the Ghulāt, specifically, the Kaysānī Kuthayyir, the so-called Kāmilī Bashshār b. Burd, and the so-called Janāḥī Ibn Mu'āwiya (the terms Kāmilī and Janāḥī are not used by al-Iṣfahānī, but in the heresiography).⁸²⁵ The negative portrayal of these figures, revealed in al-Iṣfahānī's comments and editorial contributions, indicates his attempt to define "orthodox" belief by ruling out the "misguided" group.

The third subsection (6.3.3) examines how al-Iṣfahānī differs from the Sunnīs. Although al-Iṣfahānī shares some biographical information with Sunnīs, he evaluates the biographees independently. When dealing with an anti-Shī'ī Sunnī, as in the case of 'Alī b. al-Jahm, al-Iṣfahānī spares no effort to expose his vices. As for al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī's partisanship, al-Iṣfahānī reiterates the view that the poet attained salvation by his love for *ahl al-bayt* vis-à-vis the Sunnī vision. In a similar vein, 'Abdallāh b. Muṣ'ab is remembered by al-Iṣfahānī differently from the Zubayrid descendants, whose perspective is taken by the Sunnīs. By subscribing to the version of the story with which Sunnīs disagree, al-Iṣfahānī asserts his Shī'ī belief.

Through examining how he draws the line between himself (and, presumably, his co-

⁸²⁵ See 6.3.2.

religionists) and other groups (Sunnīs, Ghulāt, Imāmīs), al-Iṣfahānī defines his own *tashayyu*‘. Consistent with his views on the ‘Alids and the history of early Islam, al-Iṣfahānī shows his distaste for the extreme partisanship for the imams and for the deviant forms of Shī‘ism. At the same time, by holding a perspective different from that of the Sunnīs, he keeps his Shī‘ī identity.

6.3.1. On the Imāmīs

As we have mentioned in Chapter One, al-Iṣfahānī distances himself from Imāmī Shī‘ism. Besides rejecting the Imāmī account of Abū al-Sarāyā’s revolt, his attitude towards the first three caliphs and the Companions also implies his difference from the Imāmīs, who are given the name, Rāfiḍa, for rejecting the first three caliphs, according to al-Ash‘arī.⁸²⁶ Apart from his attitude towards the first three caliphs and their relationship with ‘Alī, al-Iṣfahānī also seems to reject some Imāmī propaganda highlighting the thaumaturgic power of certain imams, as shown in his views on al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī’s conversion from Kaysāniyya to Imāmiyya.

On the question of the conversion, al-Iṣfahānī cites a number of reports and uses the criticism of poetry as evidence to reject the claim that al-Sayyid ever converted to Imāmī Shī‘ism. A report on the authority of al-Ḥanzaq, al-Sayyid’s *rāwiya*, states that the poet never recanted his Kaysānī belief. According to al-Ḥanzaq, the poems beginning with *taja‘artu bi-sm Allāh* and *a-yā rākiban* were composed by his servant, named Qāsim al-Khayyāt, who then attributed his fabrications to his master, al-Sayyid. People falsely accepted these fabricated poems as al-Sayyid’s real works

⁸²⁶ Al-Ash‘arī, *al-Maqālāt*, vl.1, 88–89; Kohlberg, “‘Rāfiḍa’,” 677–679; “al-Rāfiḍa” in *EP*² (E. Kohlberg).

because of Qāsim's relationship with him.⁸²⁷ Another *rāwīya* of al-Sayyid, Ismā'īl b. al-Sāḥir, also holds to the same idea. When people talked about al-Sayyid's withdrawal from his belief in the imamate of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya and his belief in the imamate of Ja'far b. Muḥammad, Ibn al-Sāḥir responded: "By God, he never withdrew from that and the *Ja'fariyyāt* [poetry composed for Ja'far] are all fabricated and attributed to him later on."⁸²⁸ After citing these two comments, al-Iṣfahānī remarks:

He professed the Kaysāniyya and the imamate of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya. He has many poems about that. Some of those whose transmissions (*riwāya*) are not correct purport to show that he withdrew from his belief and professed the Imāmiyya, for which he composed *taja'fartu bi-sm Allāh*. We do not find that with a reliable transmission (*riwāyat muḥaṣṣil*). His poetry resembles neither this kind nor this style, because this poem is weak and the *tawlīd* (production or fabrication) in it is manifest. Meanwhile, his Kaysānī poetry is different from this by its eloquence and strength (*jazālatan wa-matānatan*) and has elegance and meaning not found in those [other poems] that are attributed to him.⁸²⁹

With the testimonials of al-Sayyid's transmitters and his judgment based on poetic style, al-Iṣfahānī explicitly refutes reports of his conversion. However, what al-Iṣfahānī is addressing is more than an issue of false attribution (*intiḥāl*); rather, he is contending with the ideas behind conversion stories.

The accounts of al-Sayyid's conversion in other compilations are often linked to Imāmī propaganda, which assert the imamate of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (and, presumably,

⁸²⁷ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.7, 183.

⁸²⁸ Then, Ibn al-Sāḥir mentions his evidence: "The last time I spent with him was three days before his death. He heard from a man relating that the Prophet said to 'Alī: "A boy will be born for you after me and my name and *kunya* are my presents to him [*viz.* Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya]." He composed a poem on this and it was his final work." *Ibid.*, vl.7, 184.

⁸²⁹ *Ibid.*, vl.7, 185–186.

the lineage of succession after him) and at the same time undermine the claims of the imams from other sects, such as Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya of the Kaysānīs. A few examples found in the Imāmī compilations illustrate this point.

In al-Kishshī's (alive in the first half of the tenth century⁸³⁰) *Rijāl*, a report relates that al-Sayyid, who had fallen seriously ill, was visited by al-Ṣādiq. Al-Ṣādiq exhorted the ill man to tell the truth, by which "God will dispel what befell you, pity you, and let you enter the heaven promised for His partisans." Upon this, al-Sayyid uttered his conversion verse, *Taja'fartu bi-sm Allāh*. After his conversion, the imam gave him the sobriquet "al-Sayyid" as an honour.⁸³¹ Al-Mufīd (948–1032) narrates al-Sayyid's conversion in a section addressing the merits, wisdom, and the exhortations of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq. In this very section, al-Sayyid's *bā'iyya* poem manifestly demonstrates his conversion, which was prompted by al-Ṣādiq.⁸³² In a similar vein, according to the later Imāmī Shī'ī work, *Manāqib al-tāhirīn*, by 'Imād al-Dīn al-Ṭabarī (active in the twelfth century), al-Sayyid's conversion was prompted by a miracle performed by Ja'far, who summoned the dead Muḥammad al-Ḥanafīyya from the tomb to explain to al-Sayyid that the imamate, after al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī, had been passed to Zayn al-Ābidīn, then to al-Bāqir, and then to Ja'far.⁸³³

Apparently, the Imāmī compilers do not agree with one another as to exactly how and why al-Sayyid converted. However, one point is clear: the only truth which Muslims should follow is the belief in the imam, al-Ṣādiq. For the three compilers,

⁸³⁰ "Al-Kashshī" *EP* (W. Madelung).

⁸³¹ Al-Ṭūsī, *Ikhtiyār ma'rifat al-rijāl (Rijāl al-Kashshī)*, ed. Jawād al-Q. al-Iṣfahānī (Qom: Mu'assasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī, 2006), 242–244.

⁸³² Al-Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, vl.2, 206–208.

⁸³³ The story of *Manāqib* is quoted by: al-Khwānsārī, *Rawḍāt*, vl.1, 104–105.

the importance of al-Sayyid's conversion lies less in its factual than its demonstrative value — it is counted as one of al-Ṣādiq's feats. Thus, al-Sayyid's conversion is loaded with Imāmī ideology, in order to highlight the imamate of Ja'far. Admittedly, these compilers were not al-Iṣfahānī's sources, but their narrations did have earlier sources, which may have been in circulation in Baghdād.⁸³⁴ It is not clear whether these earlier sources were in the pool of information available to al-Iṣfahānī, but it is very unlikely that he would have missed accounts about al-Sayyid's conversion tinged with Imāmī propaganda.

Two of al-Iṣfahānī's sources, Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-Ṣūlī (257–335/874–947) and Ibn al-Mu'tazz (247–296/861–908), mention al-Sayyid's conversion to Imāmī Shī'ism.⁸³⁵ The former relates the reason for al-Sayyid's conversion to the story that he heard: Ja'far and his uncle, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya, both claiming the imamate, went to the Black Stone of the Ka'ba for arbitration. Then, the Black Stone uttered: "O Muḥammad, submit the command (*al-amr*) to your nephew, as he is more qualified than you."⁸³⁶ Like the Imāmī accounts above, this report appears propagandistic. Moreover, narrated as it is by al-Iṣfahānī's source, al-Ṣūlī, it is less likely that this report escaped al-Iṣfahānī's attention. Similarly, Ibn al-Mu'tazz accounts for al-Sayyid's conversion by reference to his debate with al-Ṣādiq on a

⁸³⁴ Al-Kishshī and al-Mufīd were both involved in Iraqi intellectual circles in one way or another. Little is known about al-Kashshī except for his activities in the early tenth century — he was a contemporary of al-Iṣfahānī. Nonetheless, judging from the *isnāds* he narrates, it seems that he visited Iraq, where he received the information from Iraqi and Persian transmitters without intermediary. In contrast, al-Mufīd's view about al-Sayyid's conversion appears to have been circulated amongst the Imāmī groups, given the education he received in Baghdad after 958 and his association with the Baghdadi Mu'tazilīs. See: "al-Kashshī" and "al-Mufīd" in *EP*² (W. Madelung).

⁸³⁵ For al-Iṣfahānī's use of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's corpus, see: Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 73–74, 110–111; compare also: Ibn al-Mu'tazz, *Ṭabaqāt*, 69 and al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.14, 224. As for al-Ṣūlī, see: Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 64–65.

⁸³⁶ Al-Marzubānī, *Akhbār al-Sayyid al-Himyarī*, Muḥammad H. al-Amīnī (Najaf: Maṭba'at al-Nu'mān, 1965), 44–45. It is worth noting that al-Ṣūlī authored an *Akhbār al-Sayyid al-Himyarī* and was known for his Shī'ī tendency. See: "al-Ṣūlī" in *EP*² (S. Leder); Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 167–168.

pilgrimage, during which he became fully convinced of al-Šādiq's imamate.⁸³⁷ It is noteworthy that Ibn al-Mu'tazz also traces his narration back to a *rāwīya* of al-Sayyid, namely, al-Sadrī. In other words, there existed contradictory reports, all asserting their authenticity via al-Sayyid's *ruwāt*. Al-Iṣfahānī's selection of the opposite version of the story reveals his doubts about the Imāmī propaganda, which can be illustrated in the statement of his contemporary, al-Marzubānī.

Abū 'Ubaydallāh b. Muḥammad b. 'Imrān al-Marzubānī (297–384/910–994), a Mu'tazilī Shī'ī *adīb* and compiler, also supports al-Sayyid's conversion, but with a rather assertive tone.⁸³⁸ Al-Marzubānī confirms al-Sayyid's conversion by reference to the latter's poem, *Taja'fartu bi-sm Allāh*, and the invocation of al-Šādiq for him.⁸³⁹ Al-Marzubānī further asserts that "Whoever alleges that al-Sayyid remained a Kaysānī is lying and abusing him."⁸⁴⁰ This harsh comment seems to imply some kind of ongoing polemic between different Shī'ī groups.

As contemporaries living in Baghdad, who shared a common pool of sources,⁸⁴¹ it is likely that al-Iṣfahānī's claims have some links to those of al-Marzubānī. While al-Marzubānī uses al-Sayyid's poem, *Ayā rākiban*, to demonstrate the latter's Imāmī

⁸³⁷ For al-Šūlī's accounts: al-Šafādī, *al-Wāfi*, vl.9, 119–120; al-Marzubānī, *Akhbār*, 42–44; Ibn al-Mu'tazz, *Ṭabaqāt*, 33.

⁸³⁸ His sectarian and theological tendency is supplied by Ibn Abī al-Fawāris, the student of al-Iṣfahānī: page 60; al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, vl.4, 229. This label seems correct, given his association with the Būyid court and the positive evaluation of him by Ibn al-Nadīm, who is also an Imāmī Mu'tazilī Shī'ī. Structural analyses of Ibn al-Nadīm's *al-Fihrist* show his biases against some jurisprudential schools (*madhāhib*) and his demarcation of the Shī'ī sects by their (or what he understood to be their) jurisprudential and theological views: Devin Stewart, "The Structure," 369–387; *idem*, "Ibn al-Nadīm's Ismā'īlī Contacts," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 19-1(2009): 21–40; Newman, *The Formative*, 94–102.

⁸³⁹ Al-Marzubānī, *Akhbār*, 39–41.

⁸⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁸⁴¹ Al-Marzubānī, *Akhbār*, see the notes in 12–23, 29–30, 41–42, 50. The *shuyūkh* that the two have in common include Abū Bakr b. Durayd, Abū Bakr al-Anbārī, and al-Šūlī. See: Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 60–61, 63–65; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, vl.4, 277.

convictions,⁸⁴² al-Iṣfahānī rejects this poem entirely as a fabrication.⁸⁴³ Al-Iṣfahānī's negation of the conversion-report vis-à-vis al-Marzubānī's affirmation, is indicative of the different viewpoints advocated by competing Shī'ī groups. Whereas the Imāmīs stand for al-Ṣādiq's superiority and legitimacy in al-Sayyid's conversion, al-Iṣfahānī upholds the opposite view. His rejection of the Imāmī perspective conforms to the lack of an imamatology in his thought. The notion that reverence is reserved for all the virtuous 'Alids is well illustrated in the *Maqātil*. This also echoes the gist of the article on al-Sayyid — love for *ahl al-bayt* outweighs everything, including adherence to a certain line of the imams, and brings salvation.

The conclusion derived from the article about al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī certainly does not suggest that al-Iṣfahānī finds Kaysāniyya agreeable. It is al-Sayyid's devotion to the *ahl al-bayt* that is worth remembering, rather than the Kaysānī belief, based on the repetitive elements in the article. Moreover, in addition to the Imāmī Shī'īs, al-Iṣfahānī consciously distances himself from the Ghulāt, including the Kaysānīs, as we will see below.

6.3.2. On the Ghulāt

Al-Iṣfahānī's distaste for the Ghulāt can be discerned in the articles about Kuthayyir, Bashshār b. Burd, and 'Abdallāh b. Mu'āwiya. Kuthayyir (d.105/723), according to al-Iṣfahānī, was a Kaysānī poet: "He was extreme in *tashayyu* ' and believed in Kaysāniyya, the return to life, and the transmigration of the soul. He was stupid and

⁸⁴² Al-Marzubānī, *Akhhbār*, 42–44.

⁸⁴³ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.7, 182–183.

known for that.”⁸⁴⁴ Redaction criticism shows that al-Iṣfahānī, by and large, agrees with the sources prior to him regarding the biography of Kuthayyir.⁸⁴⁵ In terms of poetry, Kuthayyir is positively portrayed, shown in the praise of the critics, including ‘Abd al-Malik, as cited by al-Iṣfahānī, for his poetry.⁸⁴⁶ However, al-Iṣfahānī also enumerates the reports about his “wicked Shī‘ī belief (*tashayyu‘ qabīḥ*).” The reports about Kuthayyir’s *tashayyu‘*, together with al-Iṣfahānī’s remarks in the profile, highlight the following four points.

1. Kuthayyir is one of the Ghulāt (*kāna ghāliyan fī tashayyu‘*), a Kaysānī (or a Khashabī, referred to in one of the reports⁸⁴⁷), who believed that Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya had not died but was in occultation in the Mountain of Raḍwā; he will return as the Mahdī after sixty years; and al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī was his co-religionist.⁸⁴⁸

2. The Shī‘ī Ghulāt doctrine includes the transmigration of the souls and the return to life.⁸⁴⁹ Their evidence for the former comes from the Qur’ānic verse: “In whatever

⁸⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, vl.9, 6. There are two articles in the *Aghānī* about Kuthayyir, in volume 9 and 12: *ibid.*, vl.9, 5–33; vl.12, 136–155. The main biography is in the former, under the title, *Akhbār Kuthayyir* (the reports about Kuthayyir), whereas the latter addresses his relationship with Khindif (or Khandaq) al-Asadī, who converted Kuthayyir to belief in the imamate of Ibn al-Ḥanafīyya. It is titled *Khabar Kuthayyir wa-Khandaq al-Asadī alladhī min ajlihi qāla hādha al-shi‘r* (a report about Kuthayyir and Khandaq al-Asadī, for whom the poem was composed), due to the introductory song deriving from Kuthayyir’s elegy for Khandaq. These two articles are studied to illustrate al-Iṣfahānī’s view on the Ghulāt.

⁸⁴⁵ Al-Jumāhī, *Ṭabaqāt*, vl.2, 540; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Shi‘r*, 503, 516–517. The reports that are found in the later compilations and trace back to earlier sources mostly overlap with the accounts in the *Aghānī*: al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 3111; Ja‘far b. Aḥmad al-Sarrāj al-Qāri’, *Maṣāri‘ al-‘ushshāq* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, ND), vl.1, 88; vl.2, 62, 79, 84; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīkh*, vl.50, 76–111.

⁸⁴⁶ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.9, 6–7, 20–21; yet the flaws in his poetry are mentioned, too.

⁸⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, vl.9, 16–17. Despite the nuances of the two terms, al-Iṣfahānī (and his sources) uses them interchangeably.

⁸⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, vl.9, 6, 13–14. The figure of “sixty years” is mentioned in his Kaysānī poetry, on page 13.

⁸⁴⁹ For instance, when Kuthayyir was ill, he told his visitor, ‘Abdallāh b. Ḥasan, that he would return to life after forty nights. According to another account, Kuthayyir told his aunt that his true identity was Yūnus b. Mattā: *ibid.*, vl.9, 16–18.

form He willed has He assembled you (82:4).”⁸⁵⁰ Furthermore, Kuthayyir (and, implicitly, his fellow Ghulāt) believed that the Ṭālibids, including Mu‘āwiya b. ‘Abdallāh b. Ja‘far and the Banū Ḥasan b. Ḥasan, were prophets.⁸⁵¹

3. Kuthayyir’s *tashayyu‘* holds that Āl Muḥammad was mistreated (*ẓulima*) and their right violated (*ghaṣb*), and maintains the repudiation (*tabarru‘*) of Abū Bakr and ‘Umar.⁸⁵²

4. This kind of *tashayyu‘* is false, as al-Iṣfahānī repeatedly asserts (in the profile and the reports that he includes) that it is a “wicked Shī‘ī belief.”⁸⁵³ His *tashayyu‘* is not approved by some of the Banū Hāshim, for instance, ‘Alī b. ‘Abdallāh b. Ja‘far.⁸⁵⁴ In addition, al-Iṣfahānī reiterates the statement of ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz that any Hāshimī who loves Kuthayyir is corrupt (*fāsid*).⁸⁵⁵ Furthermore, Kuthayyir’s *tashayyu‘* was based on a lie: Abū Hāshim used to send spies to record Kuthayyir’s daily life and, when Kuthayyir came to visit him, he would tell him what he knew. Thus, Kuthayyir was persuaded of his prophethood.⁸⁵⁶

In other words, Kuthayyir’s Kaysāniyya, as defined by al-Iṣfahānī, is the belief of a Ghulāt sect and its followers subscribe to the transmigration of souls and the return to life. For al-Iṣfahānī, Kuthayyir’s belief — just like that of al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī — is an “unorthodox” form of *tashayyu‘*, founded upon lies. This observation can

⁸⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, vl.9, 16.

⁸⁵¹ *Ibid.*, vl.9, 17.

⁸⁵² *Ibid.*, vl.12, 136.

⁸⁵³ *Ibid.*, vl.9, 6, 13, 18, 283.

⁸⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, vl.9, 16.

⁸⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, vl.9, 17.

⁸⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

contribute to defining al-Iṣfahānī's *tashayyu'*. On the one hand, it concurs with the remark in the article about Abū Sufyān mentioned above, which shows that acknowledgement of the caliphates of Abū Bakr and 'Umar is acceptable, and repudiation from them is not right. On the other hand, the Hāshimīs associated with this kind of Ghulāt claim (*al-raj'a*, *al-tanāsukh*, and the false prophethoods), specifically, Abū Hāshim, are screened out of the orthodox domain of Shī'ism. This delineation can also be illustrated by al-Iṣfahānī's distaste for Ibn Mu'āwiya.

The portrayal of Ibn Mu'āwiya in the *Aghānī* and the *Maqātil* is rather negative.⁸⁵⁷ Were it not for his objective of comprehensiveness, al-Iṣfahānī would not have counted him amongst the Ṭālibid martyrs, as he states explicitly in the *Maqātil*.⁸⁵⁸ Al-Iṣfahānī's eagerness to exclude Ibn Mu'āwiya from the virtuous Ṭālibid martyrs may have something to do with the Janāhiyya, the Ghulāt sect related to him.⁸⁵⁹ He was one of the Hāshimī poets and is described as generous, but his religious conviction (*madhhab fī dīnihi*) was not commendable, according to al-Iṣfahānī, because he was accused of heresy and associated with heretics.⁸⁶⁰ Al-Iṣfahānī narrates a few reports illustrating his deviance from "orthodoxy": Ibn Mu'āwiya's *kātib*, 'Umāra b. Ḥamza, was accused of heresy; his boon-companions included Muṭī' b. Iyās, who was a pederastic heretic, and al-Baqlī, who disbelieved in the resurrection; his prefect, named Qays, was a *dahrī*, disbelieving in God.⁸⁶¹ In one of the accounts about Ibn Mu'āwiya's atrocities, a man said to him, before being lashed

⁸⁵⁷ The article about Ibn Mu'āwiya is more or less the same as the section on him in the *Maqātil*, but there are differences in the order of the reports. In addition, in the *Aghānī*, al-Iṣfahānī includes more poems and a section about Ibn Mu'āwiya's father and grandfather, both of whom are known for generosity: al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.12, 171–190; *idem*, *Maqātil*, 152–159.

⁸⁵⁸ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 152.

⁸⁵⁹ Al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt*, vl.1, 67–68; al-Nawbakhtī and al-Qummī, *Firaq*, 47.

⁸⁶⁰ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.12, 179.

⁸⁶¹ *Ibid.*, vl.12, 184–185. On the term *dahrī*: "Dahrīs" in *EF* (P. Crone).

to death: “You heretic! You allege that you receive the revelations!”⁸⁶² Although al-Iṣfahānī never identifies Ibn Mu‘āwiya with any Ghulāt sect, the descriptions in the reports above dovetail with the main traits of Ghulāt belief found in the heresiography: the prophethood or the divinity of Ibn Mu‘āwiya (the reception of the revelations), the transmigration of souls, the disbelief in the Final Judgment (as in the cases of Qays and al-Baqlī), and the antinomianism (Qays and Muṭī‘ b. Iyās).⁸⁶³

Rightly-guided religion, in al-Iṣfahānī’s thinking, does not include the heretical convictions embraced by Ibn Mu‘āwiya and his supporters. Moreover, heretics should be persecuted, as illustrated in the article about Bashshār. According to ‘Abd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī, Bashshār was a Kāmilī Ghulāt.⁸⁶⁴ Al-Iṣfahānī never identifies Bashshār’s sect, but he mentions a number of reports attesting to his heresy, which, to some extent, connects him to this sect. Al-Iṣfahānī quotes a report from al-Jāhīz: Bashshār professes the *raj‘a* and declares that the whole *umma* became unbelievers; when he was asked whether that included ‘Alī, he answered with the verse of ‘Amr b. Kulthūm: “Not the worst of the three is your companion, O Umm ‘Amr, to whom you do not bring the morning drink.”⁸⁶⁵ The “three” meant by Bashshār are probably Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, and ‘Alī; ‘Alī is not exempt from faults, but the first two are worse still.⁸⁶⁶ This view tallies with the claims of Kāmiliyya: the Companions, including the first two caliphs, became unbelievers for not giving allegiance to ‘Alī and ‘Alī was an infidel for not standing up for his right in the first place; but his

⁸⁶² Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.12, 185.

⁸⁶³ See footnote 859.

⁸⁶⁴ Al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq*, 54.

⁸⁶⁵ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.3, 111, 170; al-Jāhīz, *al-Bayān*, vl.1, 14, 16.

⁸⁶⁶ Josef van Ess, “The Kāmiliyya: on the Genesis of A Heresiographical Tradition,” in *Shī‘ism*, ed. Etan Kohlberg (Aldershot: Ashgate/Variorum, 2003), 211.

status as a believer was resumed when he waged the war against Mu'āwiya.⁸⁶⁷ Moreover, Bashshār's embrace of *al-raj'a* also concurs with the key trait of the Ghulāt, including the Kāmiliyya.⁸⁶⁸ Bashshār's heretical conviction is then related to his death, as he was flogged to death as a heretic — an event celebrated by the Baṣrans, Bashshār's townspeople.⁸⁶⁹

The three examples we have examined show al-Iṣfahānī's attempt to delineate the right form of Shī'ism against the wrong forms — the Ghulāt. The Ghulāt form of the *tashayyu'* consists of belief in the return to life, the transmigration of souls, and the prophethood (or divinity) of some of the *ahl al-bayt*. These beliefs are ridiculous and baseless from al-Iṣfahānī's perspective. It not only corrupts one's devotion to the *ahl al-bayt* (in Kuthayyir's case), but also downgrades the nobility of the lineage (in Ibn Mu'āwiya's case). Furthermore, it deserves death as a penalty (as was the end of Bashshār). By relegating the Ghulāt to the “unorthodox” convictions, al-Iṣfahānī implicitly clarifies what is the “orthodox” in his view.

6.3.3. On the Sunnīs

⁸⁶⁷ Josef van Ess, “The Kāmiliyya,” 212.

⁸⁶⁸ *Ibid.*; al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq*, 54.

⁸⁶⁹ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.3, 184–189. The main cause of Bashshār's death is his lampoon against al-Mahdī, who ordered the *ṣāhib al-zanādiqa* to killed Bashshār, but some of the reports emphasise the conspiracy of Ya'qūb b. Dāwūd, who incited al-Mahdī against the poet. Although al-Iṣfahānī offers an apologetic report, which holds that, after Bashshār was flogged to death, al-Mahdī sent someone to investigate his house, as the poet was accused of heresy. They found a *tūmār* (paper) on which Bashshār wrote: “In the name of God, the Merciful, the Clement, I was about to lampoon the family of Sulaymān b. 'Alī because of their niggardliness, but I thought of their kinship to the Prophet and thus I refrained from that out of respect for the Prophet, although I already uttered a few verses.” Seeing this, al-Mahdī regretted his decision to put Bashshār to death. However, this account can be dismissed on the basis of the subsequent report that Bashshār once lampooned al-Manṣūr, as noted by al-Iṣfahānī. Furthermore, in the context of numerous reports that attest to Bashshār's antinomianism, impiety, and heretical tendency throughout the article, it seems that al-Iṣfahānī is likely to have agreed with other compilers, who believed that Bashshār was executed as a *zindīq*. See: *Ibid.*, vl.3, 111, 119–120, 122, 127–128, 142, 167–170; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Shi'r*, 760; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vl.8, 181–182; al-Mubarrid, *al-Kāmil*, 1111.

Although al-Iṣfahānī accepts the authority of the Companions, with some exceptions, this does not imply that he agrees with all Sunnī ideas. Al-Iṣfahānī seems to see some Sunnī practices as wrong, such as *al-maṣḥ* ‘*alā al-khuffayn*.⁸⁷⁰ Apart from disagreements over the ritual practice, al-Iṣfahānī to some extent remembers the past differently from the Sunnīs, as shown in the cases of ‘Abdallāh b. Muṣ‘ab, ‘Alī b. al-Jahm, and al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī.

Just as the anti-‘Alī Companions are portrayed in a negative light, al-Iṣfahānī presents the anti-Shī‘īs, ‘Abdallāh b. Muṣ‘ab (d. 184/800) and ‘Alī b. al-Jahm, opposite to how they are presented by the Sunnīs. ‘Abdallāh b. Muṣ‘ab is remembered by the Sunnīs as a virtuous man, highly respected by the caliphs, al-Mahdī, al-Hādī, and al-Rashīd, and beloved by the subjects he ruled when appointed to Medina, al-Yamāma, and Yemen.⁸⁷¹ Although there is a critique of his authenticity as a *ḥadīth* transmitter, the overall impression ‘Abdallāh b. Muṣ‘ab leaves in the Sunnī compilations is positive.⁸⁷² He is known for his eloquence, generosity, and carelessness for this life (*al-dunyā*), which is illustrated by his reluctant acceptance of the post to which he was appointed by al-Rashīd.⁸⁷³ The positive image is partly due to the fact that the relevant reports are disseminated by his son, Muṣ‘ab, who authors *Nasab Quraysh*, and his grand nephew, al-Zubayr b. Bakkār, who is the major source for reports concerning him.⁸⁷⁴ Partly, it is related to his attitude towards the Companions: whoever defames the Companions of the Prophet is a heretic.⁸⁷⁵

This hardline attitude as to the status of the Companions matches the interests of the

⁸⁷⁰ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 392; “al-Maṣḥ ‘Alā ‘l-Khuffayn” in *EP* (Ch. Pellat).

⁸⁷¹ Al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, vl.11, 415–417; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vl.8, 346.

⁸⁷² Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 2535.

⁸⁷³ Al-Zubayr b. Bakkār, *Jamharat*, vl.1, 114–119.

⁸⁷⁴ See 3.1.

⁸⁷⁵ Al-Khaṭīb, vl.11, 417–418; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vl.8, 353.

nascent Sunnī community, which gradually reached consensus over various matters, including the Companions and their probity (‘*adāla*) as transmitters of the prophetic *ḥadīth*.⁸⁷⁶

In contrast, in the biography of ‘Abdallāh b. Muṣ‘ab in the *Aghānī*, al-Iṣfahānī does not credit the Zubayrid version of the story, despite his having access to the narrations of al-Zubayr b. Bakkār.⁸⁷⁷ Rather, he relies on other sources: ‘Umar b. Shabba (via al-Jawharī) and ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Nawfalī (via Ibn ‘Ammār).⁸⁷⁸ Despite making reference to his eloquence, al-Iṣfahānī presents ‘Abdallāh b. Muṣ‘ab as a jealous man competing for the largesse of the caliphs at the court and engaged in idle disputes with a descendant of ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, regardless of the dignity of the second caliph — far from the image presented by the Zubayrids.⁸⁷⁹ Moreover, what is missing from the Sunnī compilation but found in al-Iṣfahānī’s works is ‘Abdallāh b. Muṣ‘ab’s involvement in the revolt of Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh, al-Nafs al-Zakiyya.⁸⁸⁰

After the abortion of the revolt, ‘Abdallāh b. Muṣ‘ab was pardoned and found his way into the entourage of al-Mahdī and al-Rashīd. Thus, when al-Rashīd was looking for an excuse to persecute Yahyā b. ‘Abdallāh b. al-Ḥasan, the brother of al-Nafs al-Zakiyya, ‘Abdallāh b. Muṣ‘ab engaged in a *manāẓara* with Yahyā b. ‘Abdallāh, in accordance with the caliph’s objective. The intelligence of ‘Abdallāh b.

⁸⁷⁶ Lucas, *Constructive*, 287–326. Watt, *Formative*, 256–271.

⁸⁷⁷ See 3.1; he also quotes genealogical information from al-Zubayr b. Bakkār; al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.24, 141.

⁸⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, vl.24, 142–145.

⁸⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, vl.24, 141, 143–145.

⁸⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, vl.24, 141; *idem*, *Maqātil*, 251. For the relevant discussion, see: Robinson, “Prosopographical Approaches”, 86–94.

Muṣ‘ab, however, could not match that of the ‘Alid and he himself was put into a dilemma when Yaḥyā b. ‘Abdallāh reminded al-Rashīd of his support for al-Nafs al-Zakiyya against al-Manṣūr. ‘Abdallāh b. Muṣ‘ab could only escape the predicament by lying in a solemn oath that had been proposed by Yaḥyā b. ‘Abdallāh. Although the wrath of the caliph was appeased, ‘Abdallāh b. Muṣ‘ab died of leprosy shortly afterwards, as a result of his lying in the oath.⁸⁸¹ On account of his “treason” and enmity towards Yaḥyā b. ‘Abdallāh, al-Iṣfahānī portrays ‘Abdallāh b. Muṣ‘ab negatively and neglects all the positive accounts which, in all likelihood, were available to him.

As for ‘Alī b. al-Jahm, according to al-Iṣfahānī’s profile, ‘Alī b. al-Jahm was first honoured by al-Mutawakkil, but then kicked out of his entourage and punished. The main cause, according to the *Aghānī*, was that ‘Alī b. al-Jahm often lied about other boon companions. Then, al-Mutawakkil found out about his lies and his victims conspired together to take revenge on him for his maltreatment.⁸⁸² This summary somewhat contradicts Ibn al-Mu‘tazz’s account, in which ‘Alī b. al-Jahm does not appear to deserve the punishment inflicted by al-Mutawakkil: he lampooned Banū Du‘ād, Bakhtīshū‘, and the Ṭāhirīds, who worked together to plot against him; as a result, he was crucified naked in Khurāsān.⁸⁸³ Although al-Iṣfahānī does mention the conspiracy by a group of courtiers, the way he juxtaposes the reports with his emphasis on ‘Alī b. al-Jahm’s *kidhb* mitigates the malice of the conspirators and leaves the fault with ‘Alī b. al-Jahm.⁸⁸⁴ In the same manner, Ibn al-Mu‘tazz accepts

⁸⁸¹ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 395–400.

⁸⁸² Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.10, 175.

⁸⁸³ Ibn al-Mu‘tazz, *Ṭabaqāt*, 320.

⁸⁸⁴ See 5.3.1, page 219.

‘Alī b. al-Jahm’s claim that his poetic talent first appeared in the *kuttāb* — the claim is entirely rejected by al-Iṣfahānī.⁸⁸⁵ Given that al-Iṣfahānī quotes a number of works by Ibn al-Mu‘tazz, including his *Ṭabaqāt al-shu‘arā*, it can be suggested that, through a careful juxtaposition of reports, the repetition of the *kidhb*-theme and the exclusion of certain accounts (those of Ibn al-Mu‘tazz), al-Iṣfahānī presents this poet as an unscrupulous liar.⁸⁸⁶

Moreover, it is not only Ibn al-Mu‘tazz who holds a different view of ‘Alī b. al-Jahm, but also the Sunnī scholarly circles. It seems that ‘Alī b. al-Jahm is positively evaluated by Sunnī scholars: he was a religious, virtuous Sunnī.⁸⁸⁷ He is seen as one of the companions of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal⁸⁸⁸ and highly praised in the Ḥanbalī circle: he was a pious, virtuous, and reliable person of Sunna.⁸⁸⁹ It is not known whether al-Iṣfahānī was aware of these positive comments, but it is certain that al-Iṣfahānī knows of his Ḥanbalī affiliation, which he calls by its derogatory name, *ḥashwiyya*.⁸⁹⁰

How can we explain the divergent visions of this figure, who was pious and virtuous

⁸⁸⁵ Ibn al-Mu‘tazz, *Ṭabaqāt*, 319.

⁸⁸⁶ Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 110–111.

⁸⁸⁷ Al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, vl.13, 290; Ibn Khallikān noticed ‘Alī b. al-Jahm’s dislike for ‘Alī; see: *Wafayāt*, vl.3, 355; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntazam*, vl.12, 26. He was praised highly by the renowned ascetic *ḥadīth* scholar, Ibrāhīm al-Ḥarbī, who was the son of ‘Alī’s wet nurse, according to: al-Marzubānī, *Mu‘jam*, 178–179 (332).

⁸⁸⁸ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Manāqib al-Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal*, ed. ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Abd al-Muḥassin al-Turkī (Giza: Dār Hajar, 1988), 133.

⁸⁸⁹ Ibn Abī Ya‘lā, *Ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābila*, ed. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān S. al-‘Uthaymīn (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Malik Fahd al-Waṭaniyya, 1999), vl.2, 123; al-Muqaddisī, *al-Minhaj al-Aḥmad fī tarājim aṣḥāb al-Imām Aḥmad*, ed. ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Arnā’ūt, and Muḥammad al-Arnā’ūt (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1997), vl.1, 211–212; Ibn Mufliḥ, *al-Maqṣad al-arshad fī dhikr aṣḥāb al-Imām Aḥmad*, ed. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān S. al-‘Uthaymīn (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Rushd, 1990), vl.2, 217–218.

⁸⁹⁰ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.10, 184, 194. Despite the obscurity of this term’s usage and history, it seems that this group identified with the early *ahl al-ḥadīth*, who became an important strain of the later Ḥanbalīs: “*Ḥashwiyya*” in *EP* (Ed.); Abraham S. Halkin, “The Ḥashwiyya,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 54-1 (1934): 1–28.

at the same time as being a liar? A possible explanation can be derived from considering the religio-political perspective. First, it should be borne in mind that ‘Alī b. al-Jahm was more than a poet. As a member of al-Mutawakkil’s retinue, this poet appears to have contributed to the caliph’s propaganda. Al-Iṣfahānī notes that he used to be in charge of the *maẓālim* of Ḥulwān. When al-Mutawakkil confiscated the property of ‘Umar b. al-Faraj, ‘Alī b. al-Jahm lampooned him.⁸⁹¹ This more or less explains why al-Ṭabarī takes special notice of his death — an indication of his extraordinary status as al-Mutawakkil’s courtier.⁸⁹² As a companion of the caliph, it is inevitable that ‘Alī b. al-Jahm would have been involved in court intrigues — a theme self-evident in the *Aghānī*. Hence, it is unsurprising that dichotomous accounts were produced and disseminated by both his friends and foes. Thus, Ibn al-Mu‘tazz’s source appears to be neutral or less hostile, as compared to al-Iṣfahānī’s narrations.

Second, following the first point, ‘Alī b. al-Jahm with his Sunnī (or, to use al-Iṣfahānī’s term, *hashwī*) affiliation was incorporated into the historiographical idealization of al-Mutawakkil, at least from the retrospective viewpoint of the Sunnīs. Apart from his association with Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, ‘Alī b. al-Jahm showed his hostility to the Rāfiḍīs and the Mu‘tazilīs,⁸⁹³ in accordance with the religious policy of his caliph patron, who put an end to the *miḥna* and reinstated the position of

⁸⁹¹ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.10, 178–179, 188. ‘Umar b. al-Faraj was one of the members of the council which decided the successor of al-Wāthiq. Later, when al-Mutawakkil struggled against the growing influence of the Turkish regiment, headed by Waṣīf and Ītākh, ‘Umar b. al-Faraj, like Ibn Abī Du‘ād, fell victim to the caliph’s ambition. In the context of these complex power relations, ‘Alī b. al-Jahm’s lampoon against the disgraced ‘Umar b. al-Faraj should not be seen simply as a result of his personal grudge. See further: Matthew S. Gordon, *The Breaking of a Thousand Swords: a History of the Turkish Military of Samarra (A.H. 200–275/815–889 C.E.)* (Albany: State University of New York, 2001), 80–83. The conflict between al-Mutawakkil and ‘Umar b. Faraj: al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vl.9, 156–161; al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, vl.8, 46; al-Ya‘qūbī, *Tārīkh*, vl.2, 448; al-Mas‘ūdī, *Murūj*, vl.4, 29–30.

⁸⁹² Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vl.9, 161, 196, 264–265.

⁸⁹³ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.10, 175–177, 184–185, 194; Ibn al-Mu‘tazz, *Ṭabaqāt*, 320.

the “orthodox” Sunnī ideology, as defined by the later Sunnī scholars.⁸⁹⁴ With the transformation of al-Mutawakkil into a defender of the Sunnī orthodox, ‘Alī b. al-Jahm was naturally evaluated highly in the Sunnī scholarly circles.⁸⁹⁵ At the same time, an entirely different vision seems to have been developed in the Shī‘ī historiography, in response to his anti-Shī‘ī tendencies and his collaboration with the caliph who initiated harsh measures against the Shī‘īs, including the demolition of the Karbalā’ shrine and the forbiddance of the relevant rituals.⁸⁹⁶ In this context, two opposite kinds of memories relating to ‘Alī b. al-Jahm were generated.

As two dichotomous discourses, imbued with specific perspectives and sectarian implications, were embodied in the biography of ‘Alī b. al-Jahm, how this figure was represented no doubt interlocked with the self-definition of a scholar’s sectarian view. In other words, how al-Iṣfahānī portrays ‘Alī b. al-Jahm articulates his sectarian identity. Furthermore, by presenting a companion of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal in the opposite light, al-Iṣfahānī may have been implicitly questioning the integrity of the Ḥanbalīs of his time — who did not always get along well with the Shī‘īs in Baghdad.⁸⁹⁷ The attempt to challenge the version of history established by the Sunnīs can also be discerned in the article about al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī.

As we have mentioned, at the beginning of the article on al-Sayyid, al-Iṣfahānī

⁸⁹⁴ On the religious policies of al-Mutawakkil, see: Christopher Melchert, “Religious Policies of the Caliphs from al-Mutawakkil to al-Muqtadir, AH 232–295/AD 847–908,” *Islamic Law and Society*, 3-3 (1996): 316–342; Kennedy, *The Prophet*, 168–171; John P. Turner, “The End of the *Mihna*,” *Oriens*, 38 (2010): 89–106. On the historical memory in later Sunnī works, see the next footnote (895).

⁸⁹⁵ This emerges from a comparison between early and later sources: al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vl.9, 230–234; al-Ya‘qūbī, *Tārīkh* vl.2, 446–457; al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, vl.8, 51–53; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 1316–1319; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1626–1627; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, vl.1, 355; al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh al-khulafā’* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2003), 274–283.

⁸⁹⁶ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 478–480; see footnote 895.

⁸⁹⁷ Further discussion, see 7.1.

apologizes for including a poet known for his excessive abuse of the Companions and the wives of the Prophet.⁸⁹⁸ Based on what we have discussed above about al-Iṣfahānī's stance towards the Companions, it seems that his apology may be sincere — the dignity of the Companions ought to be preserved and thus al-Sayyid's activity should not be condoned — although he may have been less reluctant to address this poet than he claims in the profile.⁸⁹⁹

Nonetheless, al-Iṣfahānī's apologetic tone also implies the controversy surrounding al-Sayyid. Indeed, for the Sunnī scholars, al-Sayyid's abuse of the Companions and of the wives of the Prophet is abominable. It is frequent to see the Sunnī compilers dismiss the credibility of statements such as “the partisans of Muḥammad's family do not die without repentance” and “a partisan of ‘Alī never slips on one foot without the other holding steadfast” — Ja‘far's justification for al-Sayyid when the latter was accused of drinking. Similarly, they narrate the reports about al-Sayyid's death without mentioning that the pain of death was relieved in the end.⁹⁰⁰

Although these Sunnī comments are derived from the later compilations, these views may have earlier origins. For instance, al-Ṣafadī narrates from Muḥammad b. Sallām al-Jumahī (140–231/757–846) a report similar to the dream-report. Al-Sayyid was brought by his father to Muḥammad b. Sīrīn for oneiric interpretation. Al-Sayyid said:

I saw myself standing on a salty land and next to it was a pleasant land, where the Prophet stood, and there was no plant. On the salty land were palm trees and caltrops

⁸⁹⁸ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.7, 181–182.

⁸⁹⁹ See 5.3.3.2.

⁹⁰⁰ Al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, vl.4, 640; Ibn Ḥajar, *Lizān*, vl.2, 173; al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfi*, vl.9, 121; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.9, 117.

(*shawk*). He said to me: “O, Ismā‘īl, do you know whose palms these are?” I replied: “No.” He said: “These belong to the one known as Imru’ al-Qays b. Ḥujr al-Kindī. Move them to this pleasant land on which I stand!” So I started to move them, until I had transplanted all the palms there and some of the caltrops. Ibn Sīrīn told my father: “Your son will compose poetry to praise the pure and honest ones (*ṭahara abrār*).” It did not take long before I became a poet.

On this, Ibn Sallām interprets: “People usually see the palms as his eulogies for ‘Alī, Fāṭima, and her children, while the caltrops which he moved and what he was ordered to move signify the defamation of the Companions (*al-salaf*) mixed into his works.”⁹⁰¹

As the dream-motif imbued with a particular set of ideas originates before the first half of the ninth century, the polemics against al-Sayyid are also found in the ninth century. In al-Balādhurī’s *Tārīkh*, ‘Abd al-A‘lā al-Narsī (d. 237/851) saw the Prophet in his dream saying: “The most vicious of those who arrogate my *qibla* are Khārijīs and the *rawāfiḍ*. The worst amongst them are the murderer of ‘Alī and al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī.”⁹⁰² That is, the Khārijīs and those who defame the Companions are equally deviant from the right path of Islam.

When compared with the Sunnī memory of al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī, al-Iṣfahānī presents an entirely different story.⁹⁰³ By making repeated reference to God’s mercy for him and to the approval of the Prophet, al-Iṣfahānī renders the article free from the controversy caused by al-Sayyid’s vilification of the Companions and the wives

⁹⁰¹ Al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfi*, vl.9, 119.

⁹⁰² Ibn Ḥajar, *Lizān*, vl.2, 175; al-Narsī was a proto-Sunnī based on the group he associated with. See: al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 2135.

⁹⁰³ See 5.3.3.2, on page 228.

of the Prophet. Moreover, by accentuating the legitimacy and rightfulness of partisanship for ‘Alī and his family, al-Iṣfahānī presents al-Sayyid in a positive light, with emphasis on the salvation which al-Sayyid attains in the end. In other words, his shaping of al-Sayyid’s biography poses a narrative that counters the view of the Sunnīs — his love for ‘Alī outweighs his vilification of the Companions.

These three cases show that, although al-Iṣfahānī concurs with the Sunnīs in terms of the authority of the most of the Companions and some aspects of historical memory, he diverges from them when it comes to the anti-‘Alid Sunnī. That is, although less assertive when compared to the Imāmīs (with their imamatology and blunt denial of the majority of the Companions), al-Iṣfahānī (and, presumably, his coreligionists) develops his own “doctrines” that lay the ground on which the “others” are understood and remembered. By marking off the “others”, al-Iṣfahānī’s sectarian perspective is presented in its own distinctive light.

Conclusion

This chapter has identified the key characteristics of al-Iṣfahānī’s Shī‘ism through the material in the *Aghānī* and *Maqātil*. The examination comprises three aspects: first, al-Iṣfahānī’s views on the imamate and the ‘Alids; second, his reception of the first three caliphs and the Companions; third, his treatment of “others.”

In section one (6.1.), we have found that imamatology does not play an important role in al-Iṣfahānī’s thought. Rather, it is lineage and virtue — with the latter outweighing the former — which permit reverence for an ‘Alid. While an

outstanding status is reserved for all the offspring of ‘Alī, a member of the offspring has to demonstrate his morality by following the right conduct and belief of his ancestors before being privileged in this way.

Section two (6.2) shows that al-Iṣfahānī shares similar ideas about the first three caliphs and the Companions with the Sunnīs. It seems that he accepts the caliphates of Abū Bakr, ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb and ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān. Although he is not without critiques, the overall treatment, on al-Iṣfahānī’s part, of these three caliphs cannot be said to be very negative. Abū Bakr is more or less absent from the *Aghānī*, while ‘Umar and ‘Uthmān are presented in a neutral light, as both the positive and negative reports are included. As for the Companions, with a few exceptions, al-Iṣfahānī by and large agrees with the Sunnī version of early Islamic history, relying on the accounts of Ibn Sa‘d and al-Ṭabarī. Furthermore, al-Iṣfahānī seems to have accepted the authority of the Companions who opposed ‘Alī as transmitters of the Prophetic *ḥadīth*. His lenient manner towards the Companions is also illustrated in the *waṣīyya* of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib in the *Maqātil*.

Finally, in section three (6.3), we have discussed how al-Iṣfahānī differentiates his Shī‘ism from other Shī‘ī sects, including the Imāmīs and Ghulāt, while asserting his standpoint vis-à-vis the Sunnīs. On one hand, through his editorial activities, such as the use of the repetition and the insertion of his comments, al-Iṣfahānī demarcated the Ghulāt from the domain of the “orthodox.” On the other hand, by remembering a different past, al-Iṣfahānī engages to some extent in the polemics against the Imāmī claim on al-Sayyid’s conversion and questions the historical narrative of the Sunnīs on ‘Abdallāh b. Muṣ‘ab and ‘Alī b. al-Jahm. By “otherising” these groups, al-

Iṣfahānī establishes his own Shī'ī identity in a clearer framework.

Overall, the Shī'ism embraced by al-Iṣfahānī rests on reverence for the virtuous 'Alids and the acknowledgement of their special status. Yet in terms of the views on the Companions, including the first three caliphs, it is similar to the Sunnīs, except for those Sunnīs who are the enemies of the Shī'īs. With their devotion to the *ahl al-bayt*, the Shī'ism of al-Iṣfahānī and his co-religionists may attract some Shī'ī support. However, it also allows room for flexibility and reconciliation for the Būyids, which can forge alliances with the Shī'ī minority without committing itself to an imam or to the clerical class representative of an imam in occultation. Furthermore, with its due respect for the Companions, the Shī'ism embraced by al-Iṣfahānī and his co-religionists could rally the Shī'īs to the regime without necessarily offending non-Shī'ī groups, especially the Ḥanbalīs in Baghdad. In the next chapter, we will turn to the context in which we must understand this kind of Shī'ism, with regard to the importance of al-Iṣfahānī and his works.

Chapter Seven: Al-Iṣfahānī's Shī'ism in the Context of the Būyid Age

This chapter situates the *Aghānī* and its articulation of al-Iṣfahānī's Shī'ism in the religio-political context of the first half of the tenth century. The kind of Shī'ism which al-Iṣfahānī professes not only attests to the diversity and elasticity of Shī'ī Islam during the period in question, but also contributes to our knowledge of the career of his patron, Abū Muḥammad al-Muhallabī (291–352/903–963), especially his religious policy and, perhaps, his sectarian inclination.⁹⁰⁴ Previous studies tend to assume that al-Muhallabī dealt with religious affairs in accordance with the plan of Mu'izz al-Dawla. This assumption overlooks Realpolitik and the power relationships of the period. It is true that al-Muhallabī came to power with the Būyids, but, as soon as Mu'izz al-Dawla seized Baghdad, his followers, including Daylamite soldiers and *kuttāb*, began to build up their own parties and forge alliances with locals or with one another.⁹⁰⁵ In other words, al-Muhallabī is an individual with his own agenda. How he handles different sectarian groups to some extent matches al-Iṣfahānī's sectarian agenda and this may suggest al-Muhallabī's attempt to expand his networks to a social stratum in Baghdad — al-Iṣfahānī's co-religionists the Ṭālibids (with whom al-Iṣfahānī's family had been associated).⁹⁰⁶

The Būyids came to Baghdad as outsiders, under the leadership of Aḥmad b. Būya (r. 334–356/945–967). Unlike his brother, 'Alī b. Būya (r. 334–338/945–949), in Fārs,

⁹⁰⁴ See 1.1.4.

⁹⁰⁵ The rebellion of Rūzbahān and the execution of Isfahdūst illustrate this point; see: Donohue, *The Buwayhid*, 40–43; footnote 1013.

⁹⁰⁶ See 7.2.

Aḥmad b. Būya did not found a secure local alliance. Although Aḥmad b. Būya's conquest of Baghdad was prompted by the Barīdīs, southern Iraq, which was tax-farmed by the latter, was taken by Aḥmad soon after he attained the title Mu'izz al-Dawla.⁹⁰⁷ Apart from their struggles against external enemies, such as the Ḥamdānids, and internal ones, such as the rebellious Daylamites, the Būyids carefully maintained their rule in a city where the Sunnīs constituted the majority and had experience in mobilizing crowds — in particular, the Ḥanbalīs — to riot. While keeping the caliphs in office, the Būyids retained their Shī'ī identity, which was useful in forging alliance with Baghdādī Shī'īs. However, the decision of Mu'izz al-Dawla to make a majority out of minorities by aligning with Imāmī Shī'ī communities came after the death of al-Muhallabī, who tried to rope in more social groups, inside or outside the court, through his patronage.⁹⁰⁸ In this regard, al-Muhallabī's religious policy, which matches the kind of Shī'ism al-Iṣfahānī embraces, shows a different orientation from his Būyid master.

It should be clarified that the *Aghānī* and the *Maqātil* were not propagandistic pamphlets. Although the dedicatee of the *Aghānī* may very likely have been al-Muhallabī, as shown in Chapter One, it does not seem to have been compiled to spread specific ideas or bolster the legitimacy of the regime, except in the sense that the Būyid vizier was a great patron for the Arabic past: the sheer size and the main themes of the *Aghānī* do not intrinsically suggest such a purpose.⁹⁰⁹ The *Maqātil*, meanwhile, does not seem to have a dedicatee. That said, the ideas internalized in

⁹⁰⁷ Kennedy, *The Prophet*, 213–219; Busse, *Chalif*, 30.

⁹⁰⁸ See below, footnote 1013.

⁹⁰⁹ Al-Muhallabī's open-handedness and patronage are well recorded; see footnote 992. The interrelation between the size of a work and its purpose: Khalidi, *Arabic*, 67–68; Robinson, *Islamic*, 109–111.

these two compilations may reflect a body of religious thought, which, to some extent, facilitated al-Muhallabī's career. That is, by keeping al-Iṣfahānī in his entourage, al-Muhallabī could extend his network to al-Iṣfahānī's co-religionists as well as the Ṭālibids.⁹¹⁰ This chapter argues that al-Iṣfahānī's Shī'ism may have been shared or appropriated by his patron, al-Muhallabī, who, through this mild Shī'ism, was able to rally support from the Ṭālibids and their partisans (al-Iṣfahānī's co-religionists) without offending groups from the Sunnī majority, such as the Ḥanbalīs. Considering the relatively humble background of al-Muhallabī, his generosity, commemorated by both the biographers and his contemporaries, and his administrative skills, in combination with this kind of Shī'ism, constituted his main political assets and accounted for his ascendance to the top of the power pyramid.

Section one (7.1) will focus on the socio-economic background of tenth-century Baghdad, with particular regard to the growth of the Ḥanbalī movement. The Ḥanbalīs had emerged onto the socio-political landscape in the decades prior to Būyid rule. With their ability to mobilise the populace, the Ḥanbalīs and their distinctive Sunnī ideology posed an obstacle for the rule of an outsider regime like that of the Būyids. It was in this hostile milieu that al-Iṣfahānī's Shī'ism may have proved useful for his patron, al-Muhallabī.

Section two (7.2) examines al-Muhallabī's career with special emphasis on his religious policy. By framing al-Muhallabī's religious manoeuvres with the mild Shī'ism embodied in al-Iṣfahānī's works, al-Muhallabī's role in the Būyid dynasty may be better appreciated: the mild Shī'ism employed by al-Muhallabī allowed

⁹¹⁰ See 7.2.

alliances with the Shī'īs in Baghdad while avoiding confrontation with activist Sunnīs, such as the Ḥanbalīs.

7.1. Al-Iṣfahānī's World: Baghdad and the Ḥanbalīs

The reign of al-Muqtadir (r. 295–320/908–932) preluded a period of tragedy for Baghdādīs. Baghdad not only suffered from the horror brought about by the Qarāmiṭa, but also encountered various social and economic problems. The social instability and insecurity resulting from economic depression and the external threat posed by the Qarāmiṭa form the context of the violence perpetrated by various groups inside and outside the court. Thus, social antagonism and aggression characterize the tenth-century *Zeitgeist*.⁹¹¹ The political intrigues and the disputes among *kuttāb*, military leaders of different ethnic backgrounds, and the viziers of the period in question have all been studied in detail.⁹¹² It suffices for us to bear in mind that declining revenues (due to the decreasing productivity of the Sawād and provinces falling out of the central government's control), aggravated by a changing climate that was cooling by the end of the ninth century and administrative malfunction, not only accelerated the collapse of the caliphate but also the coalescence of the

⁹¹¹ Kraemer, *Humanism*, 20–23.

⁹¹² Kennedy, *The Prophet*, 187–199; *idem*, “The Decline and Fall of the First Muslim Empire,” *Islam* 81-1(2004): 3–30. For detailed discussion on the reign of al-Muqtadir, see: Maaïke van Berkel *et alii*, *Crisis and Continuity at the Abbasid court: formal and informal politics in the caliphate of al-Muqtadir (295–320/908–32)* (Leiden: Brill, 2013); Mottahedeh, *Loyalty*; David Waines, “Caliph and amir. A study of the social and economic background of medieval political power” (PhD diss., McGill University 1974); ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Dūrī, *Ta’rīkh al-‘Irāq al-iqtisādī fī l-qarn al-rābi‘ al-hijrī* (Beirut: Markaz Dirāsāt al-Waḥda al-‘Arabiyya, 1974); Elizabeth G. Heilman, “Popular Protest In Medieval Baghdad: 295–334 A.H./908–946 A.D.” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1978); Letizia Osti, “‘Abbāsīd intrigues. Competing for influence at the caliph’s court,” *al-Masāq*, 20-1 (2008): 5–15; David B.J. Marmer, “The political culture of the ‘Abbāsīd court, 279–324 (A.H.)” (PhD diss., Princeton University 1994); Maaïke van Berkel, “Accountants and men of letters. Status and position of civil servants in early tenth century Baghdad” (Ph.D. diss., University of Amsterdam, 2003); Frede Løkkegaard, *Islamic Taxation in the Classical Period. With Special Reference to Circumstances in Iraq* (Copenhagen: Porcupine Press, 1950); Dominique Sourdel, *Le vizirat ‘abbāsīde de 749 à 936(132 à 324 de l’hégire)* (Damascus: Institut français Damas, 1959–1960).

subsequent sectarian identities of the tenth century. This section will examine the formation of these social groups, with particular attention paid to the Ḥanbalīs.

The chronicles record a variety of events, which highlight the anxiety and fear pervading this period, as shown in the table below. The information derives from chronicles by the following compilers: al-Ṭabarī (224 or 225–310/839–923), al-Ṣūlī (d. 335/947), Miskawayh (c. 320–421/932–1030), Ibn al-Athīr (555–630/1160–1234), Ibn al-Jawzī (510–597/1116–1201), and Ibn Kathīr (c. 700–774/1300–1373). Needless to say, the works of the first two compilers do not cover the whole period in question.⁹¹³ It is questionable to what extent these chronicles offer valid data regarding natural phenomena. The main sources — Miskawayh, Ibn al-Athīr, Ibn al-Jawzī, and Ibn Kathīr — are not contemporary sources, strictly speaking (Miskawayh had to rely on earlier sources for the events before 330/942). The unusual snow and cold winter reported during this period seem also plausible, as argued by Bulliet.⁹¹⁴ The flood, riots by soldiers, rising prices, and resultant famines are not far-fetched, given the decline of the Sawād and the decreasing revenues reaching Baghdad. The supernova, observed by Ibn Buṭlān between 445/1053 and 446/1055, can be corroborated by Armenian and Chinese sources.⁹¹⁵ This is not to say, of course, that all of the accounts of supernovae given by the chroniclers during the period in question are thus reliable. In no way can plagues, fires, Zabzab, and the details of

⁹¹³ Al-Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh* stops in 302/914–5, while al-Ṣūlī's compilation only deals with the caliphates of al-Rāḍī and al-Muttaqī, from 322/934 to 333/944.

⁹¹⁴ On the climatic changes, see: Richard Bulliet, *Cotton, Climate and Camels in Early Islamic Iran: a Moment in World History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 69–95.

⁹¹⁵ George W. Collins II, William P. Claspay, and John C. Martin, "A Reinterpretation of Historical References to the Supernova of a.d. 1054," *Publications of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific* 111-761(1999): 871–880.

Hāshimī women's cannibalism be corroborated.⁹¹⁶ Despite the problems inherent in the sources, the overall impression of this period, as it is remembered by the chroniclers and their sources, is one of despair and disorder. It may be sanguine to take these accounts at face value, but the recurrent reports, such as the *fitnas*, which may not have actually happened during the given years, are likely to have concerned the contemporaries, whether and whenever they actually happened.

In Table 7.1, the first column notes the year, while the second and third columns respectively mark the social disturbances including riots, protests, public execution of heretics, and other events that terrified the inhabitants of Baghdad, as well as natural disasters, such as the climatic and celestial phenomena, floods, and fires. If, in a given year, there is no notable event or disaster, a cross is put in the blank field (X). The table begins in 296/908, with the coup by Ibn Mu‘tazz against the caliphate of al-Muqtadir, who had been installed as the caliph in the previous year, and ends in 334/945, with the arrival of the Būyids. The decision to start in 296/908 is based on a reference to the popular movement, the Ḥanbalīs, who were called upon to support the caliphate of Ibn Mu‘tazz (see Table 7.1). This implies the existence of this group with a distinct identity, which contributes to our understanding of social dynamics and conflicts in Baghdad before the Būyids.

Year (AH/CE)	Social Disturbances	Natural Phenomena
296/908–9 ⁹¹⁷	The coup in support of Ibn al-Mu‘tazz	i. Snow ii. Drought
297/909–10 ⁹¹⁸	Rising prices	Delay of raining season
298/910–1 ⁹¹⁹	Two followers of a heretic, named Muḥammad b.	X

⁹¹⁶ See below.

⁹¹⁷ Al-Ṭabarī does not mention ii: *Tārīkh*, vl.10, 140–141; Miskawayh only mentions the coup: *Tajārib*, vl.5, 5–7; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vl.6, 441–444, 464; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.13, 79–82; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1678.

⁹¹⁸ Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.13, 93; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1679.

	Bishr, were caught	
299/911–2 ⁹²⁰	<i>Fitna</i>	Comets
300/912–3 ⁹²¹	Al-Ḥallāj was crucified without being put to death	i. Rabies ii. Plague
301/913–4 ⁹²²	1. Al-Ḥallāj was crucified without being put to death 2. The demise of Abū Saʿīd al-Jannābī	Plague, two kinds, one of which was fatal (esp. in Ḥarbiyya Quarter)
302/914–5 ⁹²³	1. An ʿAlid with the support of Bedouins assaulted the pilgrims 2. The Qarāmiṭa attacked the pilgrims 3. Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī took over Ṭabaristān	X
303/915–6 ⁹²⁴	1. Muʿnis fought the Fāṭimids 2. The army rioted 3. Angry crowd in Baghdad lynched bandits without the government's decision 4. ʿAlī b. ʿĪsā negotiated with the Qarāmiṭa and was accused of treason due to this liaison 5. Some pilgrims died of thirst	i. Fire in Carpenter Market (<i>sūq al-najjārīn</i>) ii. The bridge collapsed and many drowned
304/916–7 ⁹²⁵	Zabzab: a mythical monster which was believed to have eaten children and women's breasts at night; Baghdādīs were so terrified that they made noises on rooftops to scare Zabzab away; in the end, the government crucified an otter and claimed that Zabzab had been caught	X
305/917–8	X	X
306/918–9 ⁹²⁶	1. The rumour of al-Muqtadir's death 2. A riot in jail 3. The Banū Hāshim attacked ʿAlī b. ʿĪsā because of the delay to their stipends; they were jailed and exiled to Baṣra	X

⁹¹⁹ Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vl.6, 469; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.13, 106; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1680.

⁹²⁰ Only Miskawayh mentions the *fitna*, without noticing the comets: *Tajārib*, vl.5, 13. For the reference to the comets, see: Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vl.6, 471; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.13, 23; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1682.

⁹²¹ Al-Ṭabarī does not mention al-Ḥallāj: *Tārīkh*, vl.10, 46. Miskawayh only mentions the crucifixion of al-Ḥallāj in 301: *Tajārib*, vl.5, 20. Ibn al-Athīr does not mention it, but notes many stars falling (*inqaḍḍat al-kawākib inqidaḍan kathīran*): *al-Kāmil*, vl.6, 477; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.13, 132–133; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1682–1683.

⁹²² Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vl.10, 147–148; Miskawayh does not mention the plague, but refers to the expenditure on hospitals, which may have been constructed and sponsored as a response to the widespread plague: *Tajārib*, vl.5, 18, 20–21; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vl.6, 478, 482–483; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.13, 141–144; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1683–1684.

⁹²³ Miskawayh only mentions 3, while 1 is only recorded by Ibn al-Jawzī and Ibn al-Athīr, but Ibn al-Athīr describes the assault on the pilgrims as being led by Bedouins; only Ibn Kathīr mentions 2: Miskawayh, *Tajārib*, vl.5, 22; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vl.6, 487; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.13, 151; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1684.

⁹²⁴ Miskawayh only mentions 1 and 2: *Tajārib*, vl.5, 22–23; Ibn al-Athīr is the only compiler to mention 5: *al-Kāmil*, vl.6, 488–490; Ibn al-Jawzī mentions nothing about 1, but he is the only one to refer to ii: *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.13, 154–155; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1685.

⁹²⁵ Miskawayh, *Tajārib*, vl.5, 24; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vl.6, 495; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.13, 167; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1686.

⁹²⁶ Miskawayh only mentions 4: *Tajārib*, vl.5, 39; Ibn al-Athīr is the only compiler to mention the Ḥanbalīs (5): *al-Kāmil*, vl.6, 501–502; Ibn al-Jawzī is the only compiler to mention 3: *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.13, 179–180; Ibn Kathīr only mentions 1: *al-Bidāya*, 1687.

	4. Jurists replaced the police force; as a result, many ‘ <i>ayyārūn</i> (paramilitary chivalric bands ⁹²⁷) and thieves appeared and caused disturbances 5. Hanbalī <i>fitna</i> ; they were exiled to Baṣra	
307/919–20 ⁹²⁸	1. The escape of prisoners 2. Rising prices: the angry crowd robbed shops, destroyed mosques, and burnt bridges and police stations 3. The Qarāmiṭa attacked Baṣra	i. Fire in al-Karkh Quarter ii. Supernova
308/920–1 ⁹²⁹	1. The Fāṭimids 2. Rising prices	Heavy snow and cold (loss of crops)
309/921–2 ⁹³⁰	1. Al-Ṭabarī was brought to the residence of ‘Alī b. ‘Isā to debate (<i>munāẓara</i>) with the Hanbalīs, who did not show up 2. Al-Hallāj was executed 3. Mu’nis defeated the Fāṭimids, again	Fire (meant to burn some heretics but repercussively killed innocent people), at Bāb al-Shām
310/922–3 ⁹³¹	Al-Ṭabarī’s death: his funeral was held at night due to harassment by the Hanbalīs	X
311/923–4 ⁹³²	1. The Qarāmiṭa raided Baṣra 2. The army rioted 3. Rising Prices	Locusts (loss of crops)
312/924–5 ⁹³³	1. The Qarāmiṭa attacked pilgrims, causing public mourning, rioting, and resentment against the vizier, Ibn al-Furāt 2. The Qarāmiṭa attacked Kūfa; the Baghdādīs were horrified and evacuated to the eastern side 3. An ‘Alid rebellion between Kūfa and Baghdad	X
313/925–6 ⁹³⁴	1. The Qarāmiṭa attacked pilgrims and Kūfa; the Baghdādīs were terrified; the pilgrim caravan from the east was cancelled this year 2. Barāthā Mosque was razed to the ground, because the Rāfiḍīs were said to have repudiated the caliph or associated with the Qarāmiṭa 3. The Banū Hāshim rioted on account of their stipends 4. The vizier, al-Khāqānī, searched for the Qarāmiṭa spy	Supernova
314/926–7 ⁹³⁵	1. A Byzantine invasion caused some inhabitants at the border to call for aid to Baghdad	i. Heavy snow; rivers were frozen

⁹²⁷ “‘*Ayyār*” in *El*³ (D. Tor).

⁹²⁸ Miskawayh only mentions 2: *Tajārib*, vl.5, 41–43; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vl.6, 503–504, 506; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.13, 189–190; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1688.

⁹²⁹ Miskawayh only mentions 1, which is not found in other works: *Tajārib*, vl.5, 43; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.13, 194; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1689.

⁹³⁰ Miskawayh only mentions 2 and 3: *Tajārib*, vl.5, 43–47; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 4–6; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.13, 199–206; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1689–1694.

⁹³¹ Miskawayh, *Tajārib*, vl.5, 48; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 8–10; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.13, 215–217; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1695.

⁹³² Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 15–16; 2 is only mentioned by Ibn al-Jawzī: *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.13, 218–220; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1696.

⁹³³ Miskawayh only mentions 1 and 2: *Tajārib*, vl.5, 67–71, 81–82; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 17–18, 22–23; Ibn al-Jawzī: *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.13, 239–240; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1697.

⁹³⁴ Ibn al-Athīr only mentions supernova, and 1: *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 25; Ibn al-Jawzī: *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.13, 247–249; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1698.

⁹³⁵ Miskawayh only mentions 2: *Tajārib*, vl.5, 83; Ibn al-Athīr only mentions i and 1: *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 30; Ibn al-Jawzī: *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.13, 255–256; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1698–1699.

	2. The Qarāmiṭa attacked Mecca and terrified pilgrims 3. The pilgrim caravan was called off again, due to fear of the Qarāmiṭa	ii. Fire in two sites: Nahr Ṭābiq (one thousand shops and one thousand houses burnt) and Dār al-Sultān (residences of emirs were burnt)
315/927–8 ⁹³⁶	1. A serial killer was captured and executed 2. The Qarāmiṭa defeated the army led by Ibn Abī al-Sāj; the Baghdādīs were so terrified that many arranged to flee and gave special alms to thank God when the Qarāmiṭa withdrew 3. The cavalrymen rioted over pay 4. Mardāwīj and his conquest	i. Fire in al-Ruṣāfa Quarter ii. Supernova
316/928–9 ⁹³⁷	1. The Qarāmiṭa attacked Qirqīsiyyā 2. Mu'nis defeated the Qarāmiṭa in al-Sawād; Baghdādīs celebrated the victory 3. The army riot	Flood in Tigris
317/929–30 ⁹³⁸	1. The coup against al-Muqtadir, which failed 2. The Qarāmiṭa attacked Mecca, took away the Black Stone, and massacred the pilgrims 3. The Ḥanbalīs harassed people by questioning them about the meaning of <i>maqāman maḥmūdān</i> (17:79)	Dust storm
318/930–1 ⁹³⁹	1. Ibn Muqla was deposed and his residence was looted 2. A group of cavalrymen was expelled and killed by Mu'nis in Wāsiṭ	A dust storm
319/931–2 ⁹⁴⁰	The safety of the pilgrims escorted by Mu'nis was celebrated (some mythical traces of 'Ād or Thamūd were found <i>en route</i>)	X
320/932–3 ⁹⁴¹	The coup against al-Muqtadir, who was killed in a disgraceful way; al-Qāhir was installed	i. A warm winter ii. Plague
321/933 ⁹⁴²	1. 'Alī b. Yalbaq was said to have planned to curse Mu'āwiya, which stirred up protests by the Ḥanbalīs, some of whom were expelled to Baṣra 2. Al-Qāhir prohibited <i>qiyān</i> , wine, <i>nabīdh</i> , etc.	X
322/934 ⁹⁴³	1. Al-Qāhir was deposed and replaced by al-Rādī	X

⁹³⁶ Miskawayh only mentions 2 and 4: *Tajārib*, vl.5, 91–93, 98–103; Ibn al-Athīr mentions everything but 1:

al-Kāmil, vl.7, 31–37; Ibn al-Jawzī does not mention 3: *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.13, 262–265; Ibn Kathīr includes nothing about 3 and ii: *al-Bidāya*, 1699–1700.

⁹³⁷ Miskawayh, *Tajārib*, vl.5, 104–107; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 38–42; Ibn al-Jawzī is the only source to mention the flood: *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.13, 272–273; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1700.

⁹³⁸ Miskawayh does not mention 3 or the dust storm: *Tajārib*, vl.5, 108–115; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 49–53, 57–58; Ibn al-Jawzī only mentions 1 and 2: *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.13, 279–283; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1701–1703.

⁹³⁹ Miskawayh, *Tajārib*, vl.5, 120; Ibn al-Jawzī is the only source to mention the dust storm (perhaps he misplaced it in time, as the others mention one in 317/929–30) without referring to 2: *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.13, 291; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1703–1704.

⁹⁴⁰ Miskawayh, *Tajārib*, vl.5, 104–107; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 38–42; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.13, 299; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1704.

⁹⁴¹ Miskawayh, *Tajārib*, vl.5, 120; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 73–76; Ibn al-Jawzī is the only source to mention i and ii: *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.13, 305; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1705.

⁹⁴² Miskawayh, *Tajārib*, vl.5, 148–149; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 92; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.13, 316–317; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1707.

⁹⁴³ Miskawayh does not mention 4: *Tajārib*, vl.5, 161–168, 176–179; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 94–

	2. The death of Mardāwī 3. The rise of the Būyids 4. The execution of the heretic named al-Shalmaghānī ⁹⁴⁴	
323/934-935 ⁹⁴⁵	1. The inquisition of Ibn Shanbūdh 2. The prohibition of the Ḥanbalīs' activity 3. An army riot 4. A failed coup 5. The pilgrims under Qarāmiṭa's attack	i. Fire in al-Karkh Quarter ii. Cloud, gloomy sky like the End of Days, gusts of wind iii. Shooting stars
324/935–6 ⁹⁴⁶	1. Ibn Rā'iq became the <i>amīr al-umarā'</i> 2. Rising prices	Plague
325/936–7	X	X
326/937–8 ⁹⁴⁷	1. Mu'izz al-Dawla took Ahwāz from the Barīdīs 2. A <i>fitna</i> took place because of a Jewish fornicator 3. Bajkam became the <i>amīr al-umarā'</i> 4. The division within the Qarāmiṭa 5. The activity by the Ḥanbalīs and the official warning	Plague
327/938–9 ⁹⁴⁸	1. The pilgrimage restarted after a decade of disruption (the negotiations with the Qarāmiṭa were carried out by an 'Alid <i>sharīf</i>) 2. 'Ayyārūn looted the city 3. The Ḥanbalī activities	i. Locusts ii. Heavy rain caused the collapse of many houses iii. Cold iv. Eclipse of the moon
328/939–40 ⁹⁴⁹	X	i. A flood in <i>Shāri' al-Anbār</i> ii. A dust storm
329/940–1 ⁹⁵⁰	1. The demise of al-Rādī, the succession of al-Muttaqī 2. The public complained about the Daylamites, leading to a riot 3. Some Ṭālibid rebels attacked the pilgrims 4. High prices caused high fatalities and the deflation of real estate 5. Kūrtakīn became the <i>amīr al-umarā'</i>	i. Plague ii. Drought iii. Flood

96, 103–106; Ibn al-Jawzī does not mention 4: *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.13, 334–342; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1709–1710.

⁹⁴⁴ For the activities of al-Shalmaghānī, see: “Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Shalmaghānī” in *EP*² (Ch. Pellat).

⁹⁴⁵ Al-Šūlī only mentions 2: *Akhbār al-Rādī wa-l-Muttaqī*, ed. James Heyworth-Dunne (Cairo: As-Sawy Printing Press, 1935), 65; Miskawayh only mentions 2 and 3: *Tajārib*, vl.5, 183–184; Ibn al-Athīr only mentions 2, 3, and 5: *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 113–116; Ibn al-Jawzī does not mention 4, 5, and iii: *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.13, 348–350; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1711.

⁹⁴⁶ Miskawayh only mentions 1: *Tajārib*, vl.5, 198–200; Ibn al-Athīr only narrates 1: *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 123; Ibn al-Jawzī mentions only 2 and the plague: *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.13, 357; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1712.

⁹⁴⁷ Al-Šūlī is the only compiler to mention 5: *Akhbār*, 97, 103; Miskawayh only mentions 1 and 3: *Tajārib*, vl.5, 213–217, 219–221; Ibn al-Athīr only mentions 1, 3, and 4: *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 134–136, 138–140, 142; Ibn al-Jawzī only mentions 2 and the plague: *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.13, 374; Ibn Kathīr mentions 1, 3, and 4: *al-Bidāya*, 1714.

⁹⁴⁸ Al-Šūlī is the only scholar to mention 2 and 3: *Akhbār*, 119–121, 135–136. Ibn al-Athīr only mentions iv: *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 146; Ibn al-Jawzī does not mention iii and iv: *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.13, 377–378; Ibn Kathīr does not mention iv: *al-Bidāya*, 1714–1715.

⁹⁴⁹ Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.13, 382; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1715–1716.

⁹⁵⁰ Al-Šūlī mentions 8: *Akhbār*, 212; Miskawayh only mentions 1 and 5: *Tajārib*, vl.5, 231–234, 241–244; Ibn al-Athīr mentions 1, 3, 4, 8, i, and ii: *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 151–153, 158–159; Ibn al-Jawzī does not mention 3, 5, and iii: *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.13, 403, vl.14, 3–6, 14–15; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1717–1719.

	6. Barāthā Mosque was restored 7. The collapse of al-Qubba al-Khaḍrā' 8. The demise of al-Barbahārī	
330/941–2 ⁹⁵¹	1. High prices: people ate carrion and corpses; famine and disease 2. The Barīdīs took over Baghdad and caused disturbances 3. Nāṣir al-Dawla became the <i>amīr al-umarā'</i> 4. The riot, targeting the imam of Ruṣāfa Mosque (<i>Jāmi' al-Ruṣāfa</i>) 5. The war between the Turks and the Qarāmiṭa 6. The conflicts among the Turks	i. Comet ii. Plague
331/942–3 ⁹⁵²	1. Tūzūn became the <i>amīr al-umarā'</i> 2. High prices led people to eat dogs or leave the city 3. The Barīdī threat 4. Rāfiḍīs in Baghdad increased	i. Heat ii. Plague iii. Locusts
332/943–4 ⁹⁵³	1. The Barīdī corruption in Baghdad 2. Mu'izz al-Dawla reached Wāsiṭ, but was thwarted 3. Depopulation and the economic depression resulted in the deflation of real estate: landowners had to pay tenants to maintain houses; many thieves and robbers appeared	i. Heavy rain caused many houses to collapse ii. Cold; crops died iii. A strange creature appeared
333/944–5 ⁹⁵⁴	Al-Muttaqī was deposed and al-Mustakfī was installed	X
334/945–6 ⁹⁵⁵	1. The death of Tūzūn and the coming of the Būyids 2. Al-Mustakfī was deposed and replaced by al-Muṭṭī' 3. High prices led people to eat carrion, dogs, and cats and to barbeque others' children; many died or fled from Baghdad 4. Al-Muṭṭī's association with the Ḥanbalīs	X

Table 7.1. Year 296/908–9 to 334/945–6

Based on the table, over approximately four decades, Baghdad was subject to climatic abnormality: heavy snow in 296/908–9, 308/920–1, 314/926–7, 327/938–9, and 332/943–4; heat in 320/932–3, and 331/942–3 and drought in 296/908–9, 297/909–10 and 329/940–1. The erratic weather, in addition to the neglect of

⁹⁵¹ Miskawayh only mentions 2 and 3: *Tajārib*, vl.5, 244–249; Ibn al-Athīr does not mention 4, 5, and 6: *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 160–164, 168; Ibn al-Jawzī does not mention 2 and 3: *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.14, 19–20; Ibn Kathīr does not mention 4, 5, and 6: *al-Bidāya*, 1719–1720.

⁹⁵² Miskawayh only mentions 1: *Tajārib*, vl.5, 257; Ibn al-Athīr only mentions 1: *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 172–173; Ibn al-Jawzī does not mention 1 and 3: *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.14, 26–28; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1721–1722.

⁹⁵³ Miskawayh only mentions 1 and 2: *Tajārib*, vl.5, 260–261; Ibn al-Athīr mentions 2, 3, ii, and iii: *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 179, 184–185; Ibn al-Jawzī does not mention 1 and 2: *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.14, 34–35; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1722–1723.

⁹⁵⁴ Miskawayh, *Tajārib*, vl.5, 268–271; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 186–188; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.14, 39–40; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1723–1724.

⁹⁵⁵ Miskawayh only mentions 1 and 2: *Tajārib*, vl.5, 274–285; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 205–210, 217; Ibn al-Jawzī is the only compiler to mention 4: *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.14, 42–46; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1724–1725.

irrigation systems and the destruction by war of the hydraulic facilities, decreased the land productivity of the Sawād. The endemic plagues (in 300/912–3, 301/913–4, 320/932–3, 324/935–6, 326/937–8, 329/940–1, and 330/941–2), leading to depopulation and pests (locusts in 311/923–4, 327/938–9, and 331/942–3) further exacerbated the decrease in crop harvests, which was responsible for economic decline and social instability. In 324/935–6, Baghdad ran out of bread for five days, during which many poor people died. The price of food became utterly unaffordable in the years preceding the coming of the Būyids: from 329/940–1 onwards, flour cost 130 dinars per *kurr*, while *sha'ir* and *hinṭa* reached 120 and 210 dinars per *kurr* (and rising to 316 soon after).⁹⁵⁶ As a consequence, people started to eat carrion, dogs, and cats. In 334/945–6, a Hāshimī woman was caught, having stolen and baked alive a child in the oven (*tannūr*); she was not the only desperate individual, as another Hāshimī made *sikbāj* (a meat stew or broth⁹⁵⁷) out of a stolen child, according to Ibn al-Jawzī.⁹⁵⁸ Many tried to start a new life by moving to Baṣra, but died halfway.⁹⁵⁹ This economic depression, alongside the external threats (particularly the Qarāmiṭa) mentioned above, led to violence becoming the norm of the time.⁹⁶⁰ Riots of various kinds (by the army, *'ayyārūn*, or crowds led by the Ḥanbalīs) happened 12 times in 38 years (in 303/915–6, 306/918–9, 311/923–4, 312/924–5, 313/925–6, 315/927–8, 316/928–9, 318/930–1, 323/934–5, 327/938–9, 329/940–1 and 330/941–2), that is, approximately once every three years.

In this milieu of socio-economic conflict and constant fear for life (due to natural

⁹⁵⁶ See Table 7.1; *kurr* is the measure of capacity for weighing grains; see “*kurr*” in *EP* (Glossary and Index of Terms).

⁹⁵⁷ “*Sikbāj*” in *EP* (Sh.M. Toorawa).

⁹⁵⁸ Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.14, 46–47.

⁹⁵⁹ See Table 7.1.

⁹⁶⁰ See Table 7.1.

disasters, celestial abnormalities, including comets and stellar explosions, famine, plague, the Qarāmiṭa, a serial killer in 315/927–8, and mythical creatures, such as Zabzab in 304/916–7), different kinds of protests (some of which could unleash brutality, such as the lynching of bandits in 303/915–6) surged and attracted disgruntled groups. Unlike outraged Hāshimīs, bereft of stipends, or soldiers demanding their pay, those from lower social strata usually lacked the mutual identity, such as kinship or profession, to work together to vent their resentment. To affiliate to a set of ideas became useful for them and movements thus germinated that were carried out under ideological banners. In this context, various groups evolved and some crystallized into sects.⁹⁶¹ In what follows, we will focus on the Ḥanbalī movement, an example *par excellence* on account of its close ties to court politics and direct impact upon Baghdad.

How the Ḥanbalīs transformed from the followers of the political quietist, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, who discouraged engagement with politics, to an aggressive group remains a live question.⁹⁶² The demand for morality and asceticism, which Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal promoted, may have catalyzed the formation of their collective identity; al-Barbahārī, the leader of the Ḥanbalī movement during the period in question, is believed to have been an ascetic and a man of integrity.⁹⁶³ Nevertheless, this demand

⁹⁶¹ See footnote 963.

⁹⁶² Cook, *Commanding*, 121–124; Nimrod Hurvitz, ‘From Scholarly Circles to Mass Movements: The Formation of Legal Communities in Islamic Societies,’ *The American Historical Review* 108-4 (2003): 985–1008; *idem*, “Schools of Law and Historical Context: Re-Examining the Formation of the Ḥanbalī Madhhab” in *Islamic Law and Society*, 7-1 (2000): 37–64.

⁹⁶³ The demand for morality in Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal’s worldview and its important role in crystallising his followers into a *madhhab* are discussed in Hurvitz’s works, cited in footnote 962, and in his book: *The Formation of Hanbalism: Piety into Power* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2002). Furthermore, the centrality of morality to Ḥanbalī identity can be understood as a micro-version of Durkheim’s collective consciousness, which reinforces the social solidarity in a society: “If there is one rule of conduct whose moral character is undisputed, it is that which decrees that we should realise in ourselves the essential features of the collective type. It is among lower peoples that it attains the

may have generated the self-righteousness of the Ḥanbalīs, which may have deviated from the original teachings of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, especially when the movement began unselectively recruiting a wide spectrum of members. That is, a sense of being morally superior, could easily have created a sense of “inferior” others, against whom the Ḥanbalīs could justify their violent actions as performing the commanding of right and forbidding of wrong (*al-amr bi-l-ma'rūf wa-l-nahy 'an al-munkar*).⁹⁶⁴ This mindset tallies with al-Barbahārī's unequivocal indignation at *bid'a* (innovation).⁹⁶⁵ Similarly, the ambiguity in usage between *'amma* (the commoners) and *ḥanābila* (the plural form of Ḥanbalī) by the chroniclers suggests that, while the

greatest inflexibility. There the first duty is to resemble everyone else, to have nothing that is personal, whether as regards beliefs or practices [...] This is why every nation has a school of moral philosophy that is in harmony with its character. On the other hand, we have shown that the function of this rule was to forestall any disturbance of the common consciousness and, consequently, of social solidarity. It cannot perform this role save on condition that it possesses a moral character.” See: Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labour in Society*, trans. W.D. Halls (London: The MacMillan Press, 1984), 329–330.

⁹⁶⁴ It is argued that the demand of al-Barbahārī and his followers for commanding right derived from the early Ṣūfī practice, notably from al-Barbahārī's teacher, al-Tustarī: Christopher Melchert, “Early Sufism,” *Arabica* 48-3 (2001): 364–367. Their zeal for commanding right and forbidding wrong is well-noted by contemporary and later sources. In 329/940–1, a man named al-Ḥawājibī was arrested for commanding an uncle of Ibn Sankalā to do right (*amara...bi-ma'rūf*). Ibn Sankalā complained about the matter to al-Rādī, who ordered that al-Ḥawājibī be flogged. When al-Ṣūlī tried to dissuade the caliph from lashing the man, they heard clamour, which came from the people of Bāb al-Ṭāq on behalf of al-Ḥawājibī. To appease the rage of the caliph, al-Ṣūlī dismissed the crowd, but he was condemned by al-Barbahārī. The practice of commanding right and forbidding wrong may have deviated from the passive manner proposed by their eponym, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, and become aggressive, especially when this duty was abused by the third class mentioned in the following account (page 303). In 323/934–5, the Ḥanbalīs not only looted the shops in Bāb al-Shām, as mentioned above, but also broke into the houses of military leaders and the *'amma* in search of liquor, which they would spill, singing-girls, whom they would beat up, and musical instruments, which they would destroy. If they saw men and women walking together in public, they would inquire as to their relationship; if the couple did not cooperate, they would drag them to the police and accuse them of fornication. In Jumādā I of that year, the government prohibited the Ḥanbalīs' activity and the followers of al-Barbahārī were not allowed to gather together nor dispute over religious matters. The ban had little effect. When the Ḥanbalīs pretended to be the blind living in mosques and fomented ugly assaults on Shāfi'īs passing by. See: Al-Ṣūlī, *Akhbār*, 97–98; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 113–114; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1711; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.13, 349; Cook, *Commanding*, 95–100, 115–117.

⁹⁶⁵ The antagonism against *bid'a* can be found in the corpus, titled *Sharḥ al-sunna*, which is attributed to al-Barbahārī: Ibn Abī Ya'lā, *Ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābila*, vl.3, 39–40, 50, 52–61, 64, 68–69, 74–76; nonetheless, the authorship of *sharḥ al-sunna* is disputed: “al-Barbahārī” in *EP* (C. Melchert); “Ghulām al-Khalīl” in *EP* (M. Jarrar); Christopher Melchert, “The Ḥanābila and the Early Sufis,” *Arabica* 48-3 (2001): 361–362. Whether or not this work was indeed penned by al-Barbahārī, based on the biographic reports about him, it seems likely that al-Barbahārī held similar views to those that are embodied in this work, see: Ibn Abī Ya'lā, *Ṭabaqāt*, vl.3, 76–77.

Ḥanbalī movement was ushered in by a distinct set of ideologies, it lost its grip on participants from time to time.⁹⁶⁶ The following account amply illustrates the capacity for violence of the self-righteous followers of al-Barbahārī:

A lower-class follower of Barbahārī once happened to pass by a heretic after drinking too much. The heretic was unwise enough to exclaim in disgust: ‘These Ḥanbalites!’ The drunk then turned back and explained to the heretic that there were three classes of Ḥanbalites: ascetics, scholars, and a third class, who slapped opponents like the heretic. He then proceeded to demonstrate his membership of the third class.⁹⁶⁷

The combination of the resentment and insecurity of the populace and the Ḥanbalī ideological drive proved to be a thorn in the rulers’ flesh as well as a source of popular support.

According to Ibn al-Athīr, the Ḥanbalīs first appeared as a distinct group when Ibn al-Mu‘tazz and his partisans, checked by the fightback of those who supported the caliphate of al-Muqtadir, fled and sought to rally support *en route* from the crowd: “O people of ‘*ammā*, rally for your Sunnī caliph, al-Barbahārī!”⁹⁶⁸ Ibn al-Athīr explains that al-Barbahārī at that time was the leader of both Sunnīs and the Ḥanbalīs amongst the ‘*ammā* (commoners; those who did not serve in an army or have an official post).⁹⁶⁹ The problem with Ibn al-Athīr’s explanation is, however, that this

⁹⁶⁶ Al-Ṭabarī’s funeral was held at night, because of fear of the ‘*amma*, who accused him of being a Rāfiḍī, according to Miskawayh and Ibn al-Jawzī. Yet the ‘*amma* are identified with Ḥanbalīs by Ibn Kathīr and Ibn al-Athīr; see footnote 931. On the conflicts between al-Ṭabarī and the Ḥanbalīs, see: Rosenthal, *General Introduction to the History of al-Ṭabarī* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), vl.1, 68.

⁹⁶⁷ The quotation retains the original transliteration: Cook, *Commanding*, 122. The account is found in: Ibn Abī Ya‘lā, *Ṭabaqāt*, vl.3, 76.

⁹⁶⁸ Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vl.6, 442.

⁹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

episode is not mentioned by al-Ṭabarī, who was contemporary with the event.⁹⁷⁰ While Miskawayh does mention Ibn al-Mu‘tazz’s attempt to recruit commoners, the term, *al-‘amma*, is not identified with the Ḥanbalīs or al-Barbahārī.⁹⁷¹ Furthermore, Ibn al-Athīr, in his account of this incident, gives al-Barbahārī’s name as al-Ḥusayn b. Qāsim b. ‘Ubaydallāh, but other biographic sources, including Ibn al-Athīr himself, give his name as al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī b. Khalaf.⁹⁷² Whether this short-lived caliph meant the followers of al-Barbahārī, this incident at least shows the potential of the groups outside the court as a political force, and illustrates how the Ḥanbalīs became entangled with politics.

By the end of the fourth decade of the tenth century, the Ḥanbalīs loomed as an organised group with networks spreading over a large area of Baghdad. In 323/934–5, when the Ḥanbalīs looted the shops in Bāb al-Shām and became troublemakers in the eyes of the regime, al-Dallā’ and Ibn Ramaḍān were wanted by the authorities—that their names were remembered indicates their special standing in this group.⁹⁷³ Al-Barbahārī’s deputy was al-Bukhārī, who died in 327/938–9.⁹⁷⁴ This shows the hierarchy of the Ḥanbalī movement.⁹⁷⁵ The sources also offer insights into the distribution of the Ḥanbalī activities. Al-Barbahārī first settled in Bāb Muḥawwal Quarter (the western side of Baghdad, adjoined to the Kūfa Gate), later moved to the eastern side, and died in Mukharrim Quarter (the eastern side, but beyond the

⁹⁷⁰ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vl.10, 140–141.

⁹⁷¹ Miskawayh, *Tajārib*, vl.5, 5.

⁹⁷² Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 159. This mismatch in the name is overlooked by: Hurvitz, ‘From Scholarly Circles,’ 985.

⁹⁷³ Al-Ṣūlī, *Akhbār*, 65.

⁹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 136.

⁹⁷⁵ Hurvitz, ‘From Scholarly Circles,’ 1005.

Tigris).⁹⁷⁶ It is believed that al-Ṭabarī's house, located in Raḥbat Ya'qūb near Sūq al-ʿAṭash in the north of Mukharrim Quarter, was stoned and his lectures were interrupted by the Ḥanbalīs.⁹⁷⁷ The looting in 323/934–5 took place around Bāb al-Shām (the Syrian Gate), probably in Ḥarbiyya Quarter, where Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal was buried in 241/855 and which became a holy shrine in the tenth century.⁹⁷⁸ In other words, the followers of al-Barbahārī spread across the northern half of Baghdad, mainly the Mukharrim and Ḥarbiyya Quarters. As a result, in the view of the globetrotter, al-Maqdisī (d. 380/990), Baghdad was dominated by the Ḥanbalīs.⁹⁷⁹ The charisma of al-Barbahārī also extended beyond Baghdad to Baṣra and Wāsiṭ, where al-Muqaddasī was accused of being a Rāfiḍī for opposing that Muʿāwiya was right in waging war against ʿAlī.⁹⁸⁰

Because of al-Barbahārī's command over a significant part of the city and his ability to mobilise a considerable population, equipped with the legitimacy of the power to coerce (or, at least, they were convinced of this legitimacy), the Ḥanbalīs became interlocked with the court's factions. In 321/933, when ʿAlī b. Yalbaq, the *ḥājib*, sought to capture al-Barbahārī, he spread the rumour that orders were to be issued that Muʿāwiya was to be cursed from the pulpits, with the intention of provoking protests that would allow him to flush out troublemakers. This had the intended effect; al-Barbahārī got away, but some of his followers were arrested and expelled to

⁹⁷⁶ Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 1426; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.14, 14–15.

⁹⁷⁷ Al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, vl. 2, 551–553; al-Ya'qūbī, *Kitāb al-Buldān*, 24–26; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-buldān*, vl.3, 36.

⁹⁷⁸ Le Strange, *Baghdad*, 158–159, especially Maps III and V (pages 47 and 106).

⁹⁷⁹ Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm fī ma'rifat al-aqālīm*, ed. Muḥammad A. al-Ḍannāwī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 2003), 115.

⁹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 116.

Baṣra.⁹⁸¹ In the same year, ‘Alī b. Yalbaq and the military leader, Mu’nis, were put to death by al-Qāhir. While court intrigue was endemic during this period, al-Qāhir was unusual in his verdict, which included prohibitions against wine, singing girls, music, and all kinds of *nabīdh*, and sentenced to exile anyone known for violating the law.⁹⁸² Although the chroniclers held the motivation of al-Qāhir under suspicion — he wanted to buy singing girls at low prices⁹⁸³ — his verdict, tinged with a moralistic tone, seemed designed to cater to the Ḥanbalīs’ demands, which they expressed by commanding right and forbidding wrong. In contrast, al-Qāhir’s successor, al-Rāḍī, issued a verdict against the Ḥanbalīs’ activity and dogma — their anthropomorphic view on God’s attributes.⁹⁸⁴ Furthermore, that al-Barbahārī died in the house of Tūzūn’s sister while in hiding suggests an entrenched network through which the Ḥanbalīs were organised and sought asylum if necessary.⁹⁸⁵ The factions in court sought to curry favour with the Ḥanbalīs to consolidate their power while their opponents took measures against them. The groups outside court became entangled with politics within court. This is the circumstance which the Būyids had to cope with, in order to establish themselves in a fragmented city teeming with contentions and violence.

To recapitulate, the socio-economic circumstances of Baghdad and the rise of the Ḥanbalī movement in the first half of the tenth century, the fragmentation of the Islamic world, and the waning caliphate deprived Baghdādīs of security. In the triad of the Shī‘ī challenge (by the Qarāmiṭa, the Fāṭimids, the ‘Alid polities in the

⁹⁸¹ Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 92; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1707; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.13, 316–318.

⁹⁸² *Ibid.*

⁹⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸⁴ Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 113–114; see also Table 7.1.

⁹⁸⁵ Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 1426.

Caspian region and in Yemen, and the Būyids themselves), the social plight, and the economic depression, factions contending for power and resources emerged onto the political scene outside the court. The factions were organised on the basis of the kinship (the Banū Hāshim, for instance), geographical origin (especially among soldiers⁹⁸⁶), sects (Sunnīs, Shī'īs, and their sub-sects), legal and theological schools, and professions.⁹⁸⁷ The inter-factional strife spread beyond Baghdad: Ibn al-Athīr records a dramatic war between *ahl al-ṭa'ām* (food vendors) and a coalition of *al-bazzāzūn* (clothes traders), *ahl al-mirba'a* (porters), and shoemakers (*al-asākifa*) in Mosul.⁹⁸⁸ Meanwhile, ideologies that countered what was advocated by the external, threatening forces and formulated collective identity began to emerge. In this context, the Ḥanbalī movement germinated and won over a large section of the population in Baghdad.

The Ḥanbalī movement gained a significant following of miscellaneous members through its sense of self-righteousness, coupled with the capacity for legalized violence. The large number of their followers and their command over a great part of Baghdad gave the Ḥanbalī movement political momentum, which some of the ruling elite sought to appropriate. The movement did not die out with the demise of al-Barbahārī and the entrance of the Būyids five years later. Rather, it merged with the Sunnī majority during the period of Būyid rule and was perhaps involved in the conflicts with the Shī'īs.⁹⁸⁹ After the collapse of Būyid power, they re-emerged onto

⁹⁸⁶ Gordon, *The Breaking*, 37-42.

⁹⁸⁷ On the affiliation with legal/theological thoughts, al-Maqdisī, *Aḥsan*, 36-40, 115-116; Busse, *Chalif*, 405-450.

⁹⁸⁸ Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 57.

⁹⁸⁹ The tenet opposing the vilification of the Companions upheld by the Ḥanbalīs may have contributed to their blending in among and compromising with the broader Sunnī population (including the Shāfi'īs, who had previously fallen victim to their assaults, and those who disagreed

the political scene by aligning with the caliph, al-Qādir (381–422/ 991–1031).⁹⁹⁰

Although the Ḥanbalīs were not the only group (and problem) the new dynasty had to tackle, their rise to power highlights the predicament facing a Shīʿī regime. The anti-Shīʿī sentiment stirred up by external threats, combined with the organisation and network established by the Ḥanbalīs and others (such as the *ʿāmma* and *ʿayyārūn*), was there to be appropriated to intimidate the Būyids and those they brought into power, such as al-Muhallabī, al-Iṣfahānī's patron. In this context, we will examine al-Muhallabī's religious policies in connection with his patronage to al-Iṣfahānī in the next section.

7.2. Bridging the Gap Between Outsiders and Baghdad: al-Muhallabī and His Religious Policy

As mentioned in the Introduction, previous studies of early Būyid history do not evaluate al-Muhallabī's religious policy in its own right. Rather, these studies tend to assume that the vizier did nothing more than execute Muʿizz al-Dawla's plans. Muʿizz al-Dawla, as a Zaydī emir, became the patron of the Twelver Shīʿīs by instituting the official ceremonies for *ʿĀshūrā* and Ghadīr Khumm; his vizier, al-Muhallabī, can thus be taken as a supporter of the Twelver Shīʿīs. This assumption is, however, problematic.

As the outsiders, the Būyids' pragmatism required them to adapt to the existing

with their theological dogma), who were being challenged by Shīʿī practices (mourning for al-Ḥusayn, cursing the Companions, and the celebration of Ghadīr Khumm) reinstated by the Būyids. Kennedy, *The Prophet*, 227–232; see the next section 7.2.

⁹⁹⁰ Donohue, *The Buwayhid*, 277–287; 318–322; Cook, *Commending*, 118–128.

situation in order to remain in power. The story of Mu‘izz al-Dawla’s expedient decision to retain the ‘Abbāsīd caliphate rather than give allegiance to the Fāṭimid caliph, al-Mu‘izz, or to other ‘Alid leaders is more rhetorical than historical.⁹⁹¹ As a matter of fact, the Būyids needed the ‘Abbāsīds and others, such as al-Muhallabī, to consolidate their power in Baghdad. However, a system built upon an informal relationship is usually lacking in mutual trust and those who brought someone to power can easily topple their rule, as we see in the rebellion of Rūzbahān in 345/956–7.⁹⁹² That is, Mu‘izz al-Dawla had to co-opt different groups while constantly keeping them in check.

In a similar vein, al-Muhallabī, coming from a humble background into power with the Būyids, needed to build up his own network (through patronage, *majālis*, alliance, and marriage) to maintain his vizierate, like any other member of the court.⁹⁹³ Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-Muhallabī (291–352/903–963) began his association with the Būyids as their *kātib*.⁹⁹⁴ In 334/946, he represented

⁹⁹¹ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1725; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 208. See also Donohue’s discussion of the authenticity of the story: Donohue, *The Buwayhid*, 14–16. The rhetoric of the story dovetails with the construction of Seljuq mythology, which depicts the Seljuqs as the saviours and the guardians of the Sunnī caliphate, as opposed to the Shī‘ī Būyids, who made the caliphs their puppets; see: Omid Safi, *Politics of Knowledge in Premodern Islam: Negotiation Ideology and Religious Inquiry* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 1–42.

⁹⁹² On this informal relationship: Mottahedeh, *Loyalty*, 115–116. On the rebellion of Rūzbahān, see: Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1735; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 255; Miskawayh, *Tajārib*, vl.5, 316–319; al-Hamadhānī, *Takmilat Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, ed. Muḥammad A. Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, ND), vl.11, 381.

⁹⁹³ Al-Muhallabī suffered poverty in his youth: al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 1450; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, vl.2, 124; al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfi*, vl.12, 140–141; al-Tha‘alibī, *Yatīmat*, vl.2, 265; al-Tanūkhī, *Nishwār*, vl.7, 164. Examples of al-Muhallabī’s network and tension with others include his alliance with Abū ‘Alī al-Ḥasan b. Hārūn by mutual oath (*taḥāluf*) before being elected to the vizierate; the hostility of al-Ṣaymarī towards him and his problem with Subutakīn: Miskawayh, *Tajārib*, vl.5, 294–295; al-Hamadhānī, *Takmilat*, vl.11, 369–370; Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, vl.9, 120–121; for Subutakīn, see footnote 1018. For more examples of his networking through marriage, *majālis*, generosity, and patronage, see: al-Tanūkhī, *Nishwār*, vl.1, 15, 38–40, 68–69, 277; vl.2, 80, 158, 167, 209, 222, 307; vl.3, 286–288; vl.7, 115; *idem*, *al-Faraj*, vl.1, 32–35; vl.2, 85, 120, 137; vl.3, 274; vl.4, 139, 309; Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, vl.9, 126, 146; al-Hamadhānī, *Takmilat*, vl.11, 398–400.

⁹⁹⁴ Donohue, *The Buwayhid*, 141.

Mu'izz al-Dawla in negotiations with al-Mustakfi (r. 333–334/ 944–946) and Ibn Shīrẓād;⁹⁹⁵ later, he was the deputy to al-Ṣaymarī in Baghdad, when the latter was sent away to fight 'Imrān b. Shāhīn in al-Baṭīḥa (the great swamp into which the Tigris and the Euphrates discharge their water) in 338–9/949–51.⁹⁹⁶ Upon al-Ṣaymarī's demise, he was elected vizier in 339/950.⁹⁹⁷ His administrative abilities, as well as his literary skills, are much celebrated by the biographers, while his generosity through patronage and the literary assemblies held by him won him wide-ranging access to *adab* compilations.⁹⁹⁸ Yet administrative astuteness and poetic talent were not themselves sufficient for al-Muhallabī to stay in power; he needed to build up his own network of loyalists. As a result, Mu'izz al-Dawla became concerned over his influence, which could potentially have threatened his authority. In 341/952–3, al-Muhallabī was flogged on the order of Mu'izz al-Dawla.⁹⁹⁹ His timely demise in 352/963 also saved him from the horrendous *nakba* inflicted by Mu'izz al-Dawla, in which not only his family and close associates but also his boatmen were seized and tortured until deposits and holdings worth five million dirhams were confiscated.¹⁰⁰⁰ In this light, the relationship between Mu'izz al-Dawla and al-Muhallabī was more complex than that between commander and executor.

Hence, viewing al-Muhallabī's religious policy as his effort to consolidate his

⁹⁹⁵ Miskawayh, *Tajārib*, vl.5, 275.

⁹⁹⁶ Donohue, *The Buwayhid*, 141; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, vl.9, 120; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 233.

⁹⁹⁷ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1730–1731; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 233.

⁹⁹⁸ Miskawayh, *Tajārib*, vl.5, 295–297; al-Tha'ālibī, *Yatīmat*, vl.2, 265–286. It should be noted that the sources do not always distinguish the formal vizierate of this period. Al-Muhallabī became the vizier *de jure* only in AH 345/956–957: Donohue, *The Buwayhid*, 138–140; Miskawayh, *Tajārib*, vl.5, 316.

⁹⁹⁹ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1733; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 243. For the reason behind this punishment, see: Miskawayh, *Tajārib*, vl.5, 305–308.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Miskawayh, *Tajārib*, vl.5, 335–336; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, vl.9, 146–150; al-Tanūkhī, *Nishwār*, vl.4, 49–51, 123–124; Donohue, *The Buwayhid*, 146–147.

position rather than as the implementation of Mu‘izz al-Dawla’s decisions explains why the latter enforced the public mourning of ‘Āshūrā’ and the celebration of Ghadīr Khumm after the death of al-Muhallabī, from 352/963 until the interval during the reign of ‘Aḍud al-Dawla.¹⁰⁰¹ When al-Muhallabī’s career is understood in this light, it may be argued that al-Iṣfahānī’s Shī‘ism expediently converges with his interests. Confronted with the surge of the Ḥanbalīs and other groups, such as the ‘āmma and ‘ayyārūn, which were appropriated by the external contenders for power, such as Nāṣir al-Dawla,¹⁰⁰² al-Muhallabī had to deal with sectarian conflicts, in addition to administrative and military matters.¹⁰⁰³ Before al-Muhallabī’s demise, the conflicts between Sunnīs and Shī‘īs in Baghdad broke out in 338/949, 340/952, 346/957–8, 348/959–60, 349/960–61, and 351/962–3.¹⁰⁰⁴ In the context of the perennial *fiṭnas*, al-Iṣfahānī’s Shī‘ī affiliation could facilitate al-Muhallabī’s attempt to enhance his connections with Shī‘īs and Ṭālibids in Baghdad or, at least, some of them,¹⁰⁰⁵ without necessarily offending the Sunnī majority, whether al-Muhallabī himself was a co-religionist of al-Iṣfahānī or not. This seems to be the case, when we re-examine al-Muhallabī’s handling of groups of various convictions, which tallies with al-Iṣfahānī’s *tashayyu‘* in the following four respects.

First, al-Muhallabī took harsh measures against the Ghulāt, specifically the ‘Azāqiriyya in 340 or 341/951–954 — a group that claimed divinity and believed in

¹⁰⁰¹ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1741; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 279; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.14, 150; al-Hamadhānī, *Takmilat*, vl.11, 397; Kabir, *The Buwayhid*, 212.

¹⁰⁰² Ibn al-Athīr mentions that Nāṣir al-Dawla rallied the support of the ‘ayyārūn during his war with Mu‘izz al-Dawla in 334/945: *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 208; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.14, 53–54.

¹⁰⁰³ Miskawayh, *Tajārib*, vl.5, 294–298; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1732–1733, 1735; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 241, 255–257, 260; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.14, 84.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1730, 1732, 1735–1737; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 263, 267–268, 272; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.14, 75, 84, 109, 118, 126, 140; al-Tanūkhī, *Nishwār*, vl.3, 144.

¹⁰⁰⁵ The Ṭālibids associated with his grandfather: al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 547.

the transmigration of souls.¹⁰⁰⁶ Al-Muhallabī confiscated their property and searched for evidence of their heretical activities, but he had to release them in the end after Mu‘izz al-Dawla’s intervention, as these heretics professed themselves to be Shī‘ī; he would not want to be seen as an enemy of the Shī‘īs.¹⁰⁰⁷ Likewise, his suspicious stance towards the “non-orthodox” also led to the expulsion of al-Tawḥīdī from Baghdad, after the latter was accused of heresy.¹⁰⁰⁸ This account not only shows the importance of being Shī‘ī, in the eye of al-Muhallabī — either as personal confession or as political tool — but also the parallel with al-Iṣfahānī’s Shī‘ī vision, in that the Ghulāt are to be condemned and persecuted.

Second, like al-Iṣfahānī, whose Shī‘ism without imamatology need not entail unconditional commitment to an ‘Alid leader staking a political claim, al-Muhallabī’s relation with the ‘Alid, Abū ‘Abdallāh Muḥammad b. Ḥasan Ibn al-Dā‘ī, seems less than harmonious. Ibn al-Dā‘ī, the son of Ḥasan al-Dā‘ī al-Ṣaghīr, who ruled Ṭabaristān after Nāṣir al-Uṭrūsh from 304/917 to 316/928–9,¹⁰⁰⁹ is said to have had negative opinion (*sū’ al-ra’y*) of al-Muhallabī.¹⁰¹⁰ Ibn al-Dā‘ī was not just a Zaydī ‘Alid, but the *naqīb* of the Ṭālibids in charge of an ‘Alid fund appointed by Mu‘izz al-Dawla.¹⁰¹¹ In 353/964–5, he left Baghdad and established himself as the imam under the titles, al-Mahdī li-l-Dīn Allāh and al-Qā’im bi-Ḥaqq Allāh, in Daylam region, till his death around 359–60/970–2.¹⁰¹² Given Ibn al-Dā‘ī’s unusual achievement, his negative opinion may have something to do with the fact that

¹⁰⁰⁶ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1732; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 238; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.14, 87; Busse, *Chalif*, 423.

¹⁰⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰⁸ Busse, *Chalif*, 423.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vl.6, 495; vl.7, 42–47.

¹⁰¹⁰ Al-Tanūkhī, *Nishwār*, vl.1, 71.

¹⁰¹¹ Donohue, *The Buwayhid*, 307–309.

¹⁰¹² *Ibid.*; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 283–284; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1741.

al-Muhallabī was not in his league, socially, unlike Isfahdūst, the maternal uncle of Mu‘izz al-Dawla, who was arrested for secretly paying allegiance to Ibn al-Dā‘ī.¹⁰¹³ As al-Muhallabī was eager to expand his network, it seems that both he and Ibn al-Dā‘ī were pursuing their respective ambitions and thus their relationship may have become confrontational. No matter what accounts for their tension, al-Muhallabī’s ambivalence towards an ‘Alid with political ambition does dovetail with al-Iṣfahānī’s lukewarm manner when it comes to imams.

That said, al-Muhallabī was still interested in forging an alliance with the ‘Alids. During the *fitna* between the ‘Abbāsids and Ṭālibids in 350/961–2, al-Muhallabī took the side of the latter and, in response to the taunts of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, exiled and confined a group of the Hāshimites.¹⁰¹⁴ Another account tells of a paralyzed ‘Alid woman who was cured by a miracle. It is mentioned that, when this woman’s custodians passed away, al-Muhallabī’s concubine took care of her.¹⁰¹⁵ This may be nothing more than charity, but it may illustrate al-Muhallabī’s attempt to broaden the net of his *ni‘ma* over a wider spectrum of the ‘Alids. To patronize an ‘Alid in poverty is a praiseworthy act, which surely contributes towards al-Muhallabī’s image making.¹⁰¹⁶ In addition, a connection with the ‘Alids may have directly or indirectly consolidated his position amongst the Shī‘īs.

¹⁰¹³ Al-Hamadānī, *Takmilat*, vl.11, 367.

¹⁰¹⁴ Al-Tanūkhī, *Nishwār*, vl.1, 86–89; the Banū ‘Abd al-‘Azīz took over the leadership of the ‘Abbāsids and, from 313/925–6 to 335/946–7, were in charge of the pilgrimage and other tasks, such as leading the prayers in the congregational mosques in Baghdad; see: Donohue, *The Buwayhid*, 304–5.

¹⁰¹⁵ Al-Tanūkhī, *Nishwār*, vl.1, 265–268; *idem*, *al-Faraj*, vl.2, 282–288.

¹⁰¹⁶ Morimoto Kazuo, “How to Behave toward *sayyids* and *sharīfs*: a trans-sectarian tradition of dream accounts,” in *Sayyids and Sharifs in Muslim Societies: the Living Links to the Prophet*, ed. Morimoto Kazuo (London: Routledge, 2012), 15–36; although the examples that Kazuo adduces are derived from later compilations (the earliest being the work of Ibn al-Jawzī, who died in 597/1200), it is likely that some of these accounts go back to the tenth century, see, *par excellence*, pages 21, 26–29; this perhaps implies that the praiseworthy act of being benevolent to an ‘Alid was something commendable then.

Finally, al-Iṣfahānī's mild *tashayyu'*, with its specific views on the Companions, is to some extent reflected in al-Muhallabī's advice to Mu'izz al-Dawla during the sectarian conflict in 351/962. The Shī'īs wrote on the gates of Baghdad, by the order of Mu'izz al-Dawla: "May God curse Mu'āwiya b. Abī Sufyān. May He curse those who deprived Fāṭima of Fadak [meaning Abū Bakr], who expelled Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī [ʿUthmān], and who excluded al-ʿAbbās from the Shūrā [ʿUmar]." Then, after he heard that the Sunnīs had wiped out the words, Mu'izz al-Dawla ordered the re-inscription of the execration. At this juncture, al-Muhallabī suggested that the emir writes "May God curse those who did wrong to Āl Rasūl Allāh before and after (*la'ana Allāh al-zālimīn li-āl rasūl Allāh min al-awwalīn wa-l-ākharīn*)" and curse Mu'āwiya explicitly.¹⁰¹⁷ As mentioned in Chapter Six, for al-Iṣfahānī, the first three caliphs, though not as virtuous as ʿAlī, are acceptable. Thus, Mu'āwiya, the diehard enemy of ʿAlī, should be cursed without any hesitation, but this is not the case for the other companions, including Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, and ʿUthmān, on whom further judgment is suspended. It appears that al-Muhallabī's handling of sectarian conflicts contrasts sharply with Mu'izz al-Dawla's implementation of the ʿĀshūrā' mourning and the Ghadīr Khumm carnival, which directly overturn the Sunnī view of the first three caliphs (and, by extension, that of most of the Companions). Certainly, al-Iṣfahānī's mild Shī'ism is not the only political tool by which al-Muhallabī holds his ground in a turbulent world in the face of the challenge by the Turks and their Sunnī allies.¹⁰¹⁸ However, it is in his religious policy that we capture what is embodied in the works of al-Iṣfahānī: pro-Sunnī Shī'ism without imamatology.

¹⁰¹⁷ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 1739; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 275; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, vl.14, 140. It is noteworthy that disrespecting Mu'āwiya could provoke the Ḥanbalīs, see: al-Maqdisī, *Aḥsan*, 116.

¹⁰¹⁸ Busse, *Chalif*, 424. It should be noted that al-Muhallabī did not get along well with Subuktakīn; see: Miskawayh, *Tajārib*, vl.5, 328; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vl.7, 269.

The extent to which al-Muhallabī was successful in holding together his party is hard to tell. He fell out of Mu‘izz al-Dawla’s favour at the end of his life, although his son-in-law, Abū al-Faḍl al-‘Abbās b. al-Ḥusayn al-Shīrāzī (303/915–6 – 363/973–4) remained in the game until the reign of ‘Izz al-Dawla.¹⁰¹⁹ Whether or not al-Muhallabī was convinced of al-Iṣfahānī’s Shī‘ism, how he dealt with the sectarian conflicts, the Shī‘ī pretenders (the Ghulāt and Ibn al-Dā‘ī), and the ‘Alids more or less matches al-Iṣfahānī’s understanding of *tashayyu’*. Al-Muhallabī’s charity and generosity should not be reduced to purely Machiavellian impulses, but, nonetheless, informal forms of networking such as *nī‘ma* and *iṣṭinā’* constituted important ways to secure loyalty and support in a premodern society.¹⁰²⁰ In this regard, the patronage relationship between al-Iṣfahānī and al-Muhallabī goes beyond that between an *adīb* and his appreciator. As mentioned in Chapter One, al-Iṣfahānī came from a Shī‘ī *kuttāb* background, on both his paternal (Umayyad and Iṣfahānī) and maternal (Āl Thawāba) sides,¹⁰²¹ and he himself studied with numerous *shuyūkh* of Shī‘ī tendency, such as Ibn ‘Uqda and some Ṭālibids.¹⁰²² By establishing a connection with the moderate Shī‘ī elite, like al-Iṣfahānī, al-Muhallabī expanded the domain from which he could rally support and in which he could assert authority not only over the moderate Shī‘ī elite but also over some of the Ṭālibids.

To sum up, this section first argued that al-Muhallabī’s career should not be viewed as tracking Mu‘izz al-Dawla’s agenda. Against the claim that al-Muhallabī favoured Twelver Shī‘ism, al-Muhallabī was in fact trying to consolidate his position by

¹⁰¹⁹ “‘Abbās b. al-Ḥusayn al-Shīrāzī” in *EF*³ (K. Hachmeier).

¹⁰²⁰ Mottahedeh, *Loyalty*, 72–96.

¹⁰²¹ See: 1.1.2 and 1.1.3.

¹⁰²² See: 1.1.3, page 204 and al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 547.

aligning with as many groups as possible. Given his treatment of the Ghulāt, his apathy towards the ‘Alid pretender, his eagerness to help the Ṭālibids, and his aversion to the excessive execration of the Companions, the Imāmī Shī‘īs were not the only group whose support al-Muhallabī tried to secure. From his dealings of various groups, it appears that the kind of Shī‘ism al-Iṣfahānī embraced was appropriated by al-Muhallabī, whether or not the latter shared the same confession. Leaving aside the question of how effectively al-Muhallabī’s tactics worked, the Shī‘ī ideas embodied in al-Iṣfahānī’s works, although they never evolved into one of the major sects of Islam, did play a role in a moment of history.

Conclusion

This chapter has situated al-Iṣfahānī’s Shī‘ism in its own context. In section one (7.1), we examined the four decades before the Būyid rule, with special emphasis on the social grievances resulting from climatic abnormality, perennial plagues and pests, decreasing revenues, and socio-political disorder. The impotence of the caliphate and the fragile power balance, which caused rapid changes among ruling groups, created space for the development of social movements which were organised on the basis of profession, sectarian conviction, blood ties, and ethnicity and expressed disgruntlement in the form of riots, protests, and other violent activities. Amongst these, the germination of the Ḥanbalī movement deserves special attention. The Ḥanbalī movement distinguished itself from others *madhāhib* by their command over the northern half of Baghdad, their incorporation of people from different social strata into membership, and their justification of the practice of violence in the name of commanding right and forbidding wrong, under the

leadership of al-Barbahārī. With its numerous supporters all over Baghdad, the entanglement of the Ḥanbalīs with the political and military elite illustrates two points: first, the populace's potency as a political force; second, as a political force, the Ḥanbalīs and other groups, such as the *'ayyārūn*, were one of the obstacles which the Būyids had to address to perpetuate their dynasty. In this light, al-Muhallabī's religious policy, tinged with a mild Shī'ī tone, makes sense.

In section two (7.2), we have defined al-Muhallabī's position within the Būyid political system. Unlike what previous studies have argued, al-Muhallabī's treatment of various sectarian groups is not always in accordance with Mu'izz al-Dawla's plan. Rather, al-Muhallabī was expanding his own network of *ni'ma*. For this purpose, al-Iṣfahānī's Shī'ism and, moreover, associating with al-Iṣfahānī, who came from a Shī'ī elite background, could be useful. In many aspects, such as his stance towards the Companions, the Ghulāt, the Zaydī pretender, and the 'Alids, al-Muhallabī's handling of the religious affairs more or less tallies with the key features of al-Iṣfahānī's Shī'ī beliefs. By building up connections with moderate Shī'īs, the Ṭālibids, and a wide spectrum of people (elite or otherwise), al-Muhallabī sought to entrench himself and his party within the new regime.

In combination with the findings of Chapter Six, this chapter has reframed al-Iṣfahānī's Shī'ī beliefs within the context of Baghdad, before and after Būyid rule, and, specifically, in light of the career of his patron, al-Muhallabī. The Shī'ī ideas embodied in al-Iṣfahānī's works may have been useful for the outside polity such as the Būyids and their followers to secure their positions in a Sunnī dominant city, in which different groups had been or were to be appropriated by the factions in court

as well as others such as the Ḥamdānids. An examination of the inter-relationship between al-Muhallabī and al-Iṣfahānī offers a new perspective on the former's political career. Further, it illustrates the reciprocal nature of patronage and its importance in this period.

Conclusion

This thesis began with the question of whether the *Kitāb al-Aghānī* embodies al-Iṣfahānī's Shī'ī perspective. From this question, two further enquiries follow. How can one demonstrate that a book of songs can be seen as a Shī'ī source? And, if the *Aghānī* reflects al-Iṣfahānī's sectarian tendency, what are the implications? The question of al-Iṣfahānī's Shī'ism has been addressed by the previous studies on the *Aghānī* and has been answered in the negative, but their lack of a systematic approach does not command confidence in their conclusions and sometimes leads to self-contradictions. This study employs redaction criticism to address the question. Redaction criticism — an approach mainly concerned with editorial interventions — is used here as a means to examine the compiler's selection, repetition, and arrangement of the material, in addition to their editorial notes and the profiles of articles. This approach not only provides us with a framework for analysis, but also avoids a superficial reading of the texts, as conducted in previous studies. The results of the analyses show that the *Aghānī* to some extent presents the Shī'ī past in accordance with al-Iṣfahānī's sectarian views. This conclusion suggests that the *Aghānī* has potential as a source for understanding al-Iṣfahānī's Shī'ī thinking, which does not fit in with that of any Shī'ī sect categorised by the heresiography. This not only highlights the multifariousness of Shī'ī Islam, but also offers new perspectives into the role of al-Iṣfahānī's patron, al-Muhallabī, in the early Būyid era.

The use of redaction criticism involves two issues: first, the textual status of the *Aghānī*; second, the transmission of the source material in relation to al-Iṣfahānī's selection of reports. These two issues have been addressed respectively in Chapters

Two and Three. Despite the textual defects and the loss of the original order of the articles in the *Aghānī*, the comparison of the manuscripts with the text in the printed edition reveals similarity in terms of wording and structure within a given article. Furthermore, the *Aghānī* displays a number of the characteristics of Schoeler's *syngrammat*. Thus, structural analysis of the *Aghānī* can very likely reveal the compiler's editorial role. As for the transmission of the source material available to al-Iṣfahānī, Chapter Three investigates the sources that are most relevant to the material needed to explore the existence of the compiler's sectarian perspective and deduces three points: first, the *isnāds* in the *Aghānī* are not fabricated and can thus inform on those from whom al-Iṣfahānī acquired the reports in question; second, certain texts in the form known to us, such as al-Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh*, can be established as having been at al-Iṣfahānī's disposal; third, due to the dissemination of knowledge through the *majālis* and the book markets, the material that cannot be proved to have been available to al-Iṣfahānī is useful in the sense that it has the potential to offer insights into the discourse with which he was engaged. These deductions form the hypothetical basis for the application of redaction criticism to the *Aghānī*.

Chapters Four and Five present analyses of twenty-six articles about the Shī'īs and their enemies. The analyses show the limits of redaction criticism, as the source material and the textual problems in the *Aghānī* prevent us from reaching a firm conclusion as to al-Iṣfahānī's editorial decisions. However, redaction criticism does illuminate al-Iṣfahānī's multiple agendas. The *Aghānī* was indeed compiled in accordance with al-Iṣfahānī's Shī'ī perspective, although this is not the only concern of his. As a book of songs, al-Iṣfahānī prioritises the light-hearted reports about Sukayna over al-Ḥusayn's martyrdom. Apart from his concern for genre, his personal

preference for certain figures, such as Ibn al-Mu‘tazz, also supersedes the assertion of his sectarian perspective. Besides, the analyses also confirm al-Iṣfahānī’s role was as a compiler — he is constrained by his existing pool of information. Thus, al-Iṣfahānī presents his subjects, such as al-Nu‘mān b. Bashīr, similarly to other compilers, but it is not known whether al-Iṣfahānī agrees with such presentations. That said, the analyses unmistakably demonstrate al-Iṣfahānī’s articulation of his sectarian views in the *Aghānī*. Analyses of his editorial interventions reveal his attempt to present the anti-Shī‘ī negatively, while accentuating the legitimacy of ‘Alī and the special standing of his offspring. This effect is achieved by the deliberate selection of reports, including rare and special sources, the use of repetition, and the insertion of his own comments. Furthermore, literary analysis through redaction criticism illuminates the intricacy executed by the compiler’s editorial hand. Through careful examination, al-Iṣfahānī’s editorial decisions, when read in their contexts, highlight the ingeniousness and creativity of the compiler.

The conclusion that the *Aghānī* is permeated by its compiler’s sectarian views suggests that this work can be used to define al-Iṣfahānī’s *tashayyu‘* and, by extension, that of his co-religionists, as shown in Chapter Six. Against the previous literature, which views al-Iṣfahānī as a Zaydī, based on al-Ṭūsī’s claim, this thesis argues that the term *Zaydiyya* in this period does not convey a clear set of creeds and, based on the textual evidence derived from al-Iṣfahānī’s *Maqātil* and *Aghānī*, he cannot be identified with this group (Chapter One, especially 1.2). Rather, the kind of the Shī‘ism embraced by al-Iṣfahānī emphasises the veneration of the virtuous ‘Alids without any commitment to a specific lineage of imams and takes a moderate stance towards the Companions, including the first three caliphs, but it does differ in one

way or another from the outlook of Sunnīs and other Shīʿī sects, including the Imāmīs and Ghulāt.

This Shīʿism, when situated in al-Iṣfahānī's own context, sheds light on the role of his patron, Abū Muḥammad al-Muhallabī, the Būyid vizier in the service of Muʿizz al-Dawla. In Chapter Seven, we have presented the socio-economic predicament in Baghdad with regard to the Ḥanbalī movement before the advent of the Būyids. Congregating together under the banner of a set of moralistic or sectarian ideal, ethnicity, profession, or blood ties, the rise of the various social groups exacerbated the instability and difficulty for the Būyids to establish their rule. As the groups that came into power with the Būyids struggled to build up their own forces (co-opting either newcomers like themselves or the existing forces), al-Muhallabī was no exception. The way he dealt with the Ṭālibids and the conflicts between Shīʿīs and Sunnīs, as well as the activities of the Ghulāt called ʿAzāqiriyya, seem to dovetail with the ethos of al-Iṣfahānī's Shīʿism. It is not clear whether this means that al-Muhallabī shares the same sectarian belief with him, but the patron-client relationship between the two in this specific context implies that al-Muhallabī was eager to rope in the Ṭālibids and the elite via sympathy for the ʿAlids. That is, al-Iṣfahānī was a potential bridge by which he could reach these groups. By synthesizing the results of literary analysis through redaction criticism, this thesis presents a new perspective into the historical context of the text, in the hope of offering further insights into the early Būyid period.

This thesis proffers an example of the application of redaction criticism to an Arabic *akhbār* compilation; a new light on the studies on the *Aghānī*, on the career of al-

Muhallabī, and on the development of Shīʿī Islam. In doing so, it highlights the following avenues for future research projects.

While this thesis explores the articulation of the sectarian discourse in the *Aghānī*, there are other aspects worth further investigation. It has been reiterated in the Introduction and in Chapter Four that the *Aghānī*, with its wide ranging coverage of different themes, allows for multiple readings and the assertion of al-Iṣfahānī's Shīʿī perspective is not the only editorial concern. As an important source for musicians, an investigation into al-Iṣfahānī's treatment of the musicians who affiliated with Iṣḥāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī — whom al-Iṣfahānī admired — and of the followers of Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī may shed light on how his partisanship for Iṣḥāq has determined our understanding of music history.¹⁰²³ Besides, given the textual problems of the *Aghānī*, an attempt to produce a new edition incorporating more manuscripts would meet with appreciation.¹⁰²⁴ Furthermore, in agreement with Fleischhammer and Günther, this thesis argues that the *isnāds* in the *Aghānī* truthfully indicate al-Iṣfahānī sources, at least as far as the direct informants are concerned. Thus, the *Aghānī* can be used to reconstruct works that are no longer extant, such as those of al-Zubayr b. Bakkār and ʿUmar b. Shabba, despite the difficulties and problems inherent in this kind of project.¹⁰²⁵ A study of the narrations from al-Iṣfahānī's family members, especially his uncle, al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad, can be useful, as very little biographical information about them is available. However, their narrations reveal their association with intellectuals, including the court elite and thus, to some extent,

¹⁰²³ Footnote 364.

¹⁰²⁴ Kilpatrick, *Making*, 279.

¹⁰²⁵ Ella Laudou-Tasserou, "On the Reconstruction of Lost Sources," *Qanṭara: Revista de Estudios Arabes* 25-1 (2004): 45–91.

elucidate the family's history, which may offer an avenue for research on the Umayyads in the east after the 'Abbāsīd Revolution.¹⁰²⁶

The utility of redaction criticism as a conceptual framework for studying Arabic compilations is beyond doubt. Although more recent research has examined Islamic historiography through such literary analysis, there are important works that remain unexplored.¹⁰²⁷ Alongside the investigation into the *Aghānī*, this thesis found the biographical dictionaries on the Companions, such as Ibn 'Abd al-Barr's *al-Istī'āb*, to be potential objects for redaction criticism. Furthermore, as a specific interpretation of the past can be inserted into a book of songs, one may explore different discourses embedded in the *adab* works — for instance, al-Mubarrid's *al-Kāmil*, a philological compilation containing abundant historical material.

By defining al-Iṣfahānī's Shī'ī perspective on the basis of his works, this study underscores the importance of re-evaluating the categories laid down by the heresiographers and the labels given by the '*ulamā*'. As the sects were never static and their ideas always evolved and changed to adapt to the status quo, a better way to appreciate a scholar's thoughts is through his works and context. This may be an inspirational approach to evaluating the sectarian affiliation of a number of al-Iṣfahānī's sources — Ibn 'Uqda, *par excellence* — given the contradictory accounts regarding his Shī'ī tendency.¹⁰²⁸ A further investigation into the kind of the Shī'ism al-Iṣfahānī professes based on identifying his co-religionists may further support the argument of this thesis. Apart from al-Iṣfahānī's sources, such as al-Jawharī, about

¹⁰²⁶ An example of this investigation: Khalafallāh, *Ṣāhib*, 33–51.

¹⁰²⁷ Pages 22–36.

¹⁰²⁸ Page 205.

whom very limited information is found,¹⁰²⁹ the scholars found in the Sunnī biographical dictionaries known to have a *tashayyu*‘ tendency — for instance, ‘Alī b. al-Madīnī — may have also embraced the ideas similar to al-Iṣfahānī’s vision.¹⁰³⁰ The purpose is not to invent a new category with which to label the scholars. Rather, a study of the existence and evolution of this mild Shī‘ism not only offers an alternative perspective to the binary Sunnī-Shī‘ī discourses, but also highlights negotiation and reconciliation on the part of medieval scholars in response to the conflicts present in historical memory. Such research may contribute to studies on the tendency called *tashayyu*‘ *ḥasan* in Ṣūfī Islam.¹⁰³¹

In addition to what has been proposed above, there remain many gaps that need to be filled in studies on the *Aghānī*, on the complexity of Shī‘ism, and on Islamic historiography. Through a literary and historical analysis of a book of songs, the present study offers new insights into the text and its interaction with its historical context, in the hope of providing future research on the relevant subjects with some useful notes.

¹⁰²⁹ See Appendix Four and 3.1.

¹⁰³⁰ Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 2800.

¹⁰³¹ Momen, *An Introduction*, 96.

Appendix One: A list of the Ṭālibids in the first two parts of the *Maqātil al-Ṭālibīyīn*

The first column notes the serial number according to the order of the *Maqātil*.¹⁰³²

The second and third columns give the name and the lineage of the subject: ‘Aqīlid (the offspring of ‘Aqīl b. Abī Ṭālib), Ja‘farid (Ja‘far b. Abī Ṭālib), ‘Alid (non-Ḥasanid and non-Ḥusaynid progeny of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib), Ḥasanid (descendant of al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī), Ḥusaynid (descendant of al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī), and others. In a case where the lineage is obscure, a question mark (?) is given. The fourth column notes the page numbers for the fifth and sixth columns, which respectively outline the subject’s virtues or vices (if any) and the account of his death. A statistical summary of the martyrs is given in the end.

#	Name	Lineage	Page (virtue/death)	Virtue	Death
1	Ja‘far b. Abī Ṭālib	X	34–35/30–33	Prophetic <i>ḥadīth</i>	Killed
2	Muḥammad b. Ja‘far	Ja‘farid	X/37–38	X	Killed
3	‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib	X	42/43–51	Uncountable	Killed
4	Al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī	X	62/80–83	His <i>khuṭba</i>	Poisoned
5	Al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī	X	121/98–121	His elegies	Killed
6	Muslim b. ‘Aqīl b. Abī Ṭālib	‘Aqīlid	X/86	X	Killed
7	‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn al-Akbar	Ḥusaynid	86/86	Bravery; generosity	Killed
8	‘Abdallāh b. ‘Alī	‘Alid	X/88	X	Killed
9	Ja‘far b. ‘Alī	‘Alid	X/88	X	Killed
10	‘Uthmān b. ‘Alī	‘Alid	X/89	X	Killed
11	Al-‘Abbās b. ‘Alī	‘Alid	90/90	Handsome	Killed
12	Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Aṣghar	‘Alid	X/91	X	Killed
13	Abū Bakr b. ‘Alī	‘Alid	X/91	X	Killed
14	Ibrāhīm b. ‘Alī (al-Iṣfahānī is unsure of his existence)	‘Alid	X/91	X	Killed
15	Abū Bakr b. al-Ḥusayn	Ḥusaynid	X/92	X	Killed
16	Al-Qāsim b. al-Ḥasan	Ḥasanid	93/92–93	Invocation of al-Ḥusayn	Killed
17	‘Abdallāh b. al-Ḥasan	Ḥasanid	X/93	X	Killed

¹⁰³² This table is based on the edition by Ṣaqr, published by Manshūrāt al-Sharīf al-Raḍī.

18	‘Abdallāh b. al-Ḥusayn	Ḥusaynid	99/99	Invocation of al-Ḥusayn	Killed
19	‘Awn b. ‘Abdallāh	Ja‘farid	X/95	X	Killed
20	Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh	Ja‘farid	X/96	X	Killed
21	‘Ubaydallāh b. ‘Abdallāh	Ja‘farid	X/96	X	Killed
22	‘Abdallāh ‘Aqīl	‘Aqīlid	X/96	X	Killed
23	Ja‘far b. ‘Aqīl	‘Aqīlid	X/97	X	Killed
24	‘Abdallāh al-Akbar b. ‘Aqīl	‘Aqīlid	X/97	X	Killed
25	Muḥammad b. Muslim	‘Aqīlid	X/97	X	Killed
26	‘Abdallāh b. Muslim	‘Aqīlid	X/98	X	Killed
27	Muḥammad b. Abī Sa‘īd al-Aḥwal	‘Aqīlid	X/98	X	Killed
28	Abū Bakr b. ‘Abdallāh	Ja‘farid	X/122	X	Killed
29	‘Awn b. ‘Abdallāh	Ja‘farid	X/123	X	Killed
30	‘Ubaydallāh b. ‘Alī	‘Alid	X/123	X	Killed
31	‘Abdallāh b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya (Abū Hāshim)	‘Alid	X/124	X	Poisoned
32	Zayd b. ‘Alī	Ḥusaynid	125–129/129–139	Many (his <i>aṣḥāb</i> will enter heaven)	Killed
33	Yahyā b. Zayd	Ḥusaynid	148/146–150	<i>Barakāt</i>	Killed
34	‘Abdallāh b. Muḥammad	Ḥusaynid	151/151	Intercession with God	Poisoned
35	‘Abdallāh b. al-Musawwir	Ja‘farid	X/151	X	Killed By 36 ¹⁰³³
36	‘Abdallāh b. Mu‘āwiya	Ja‘farid	152/155-159	Heresy; evil	Killed
37	‘Ubaydallāh b. al-Ḥusayn	Ḥusaynid	X/159	X	Poisoned
38	‘Abdallāh b. al-Ḥasan	Ḥasanid	167–171/171	The chief of the Banū Hāshim and others	Imprisoned
39	Al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥasan	Ḥasanid	171/172	Piety; virtue; adherence to the Zaydī law of commanding right	Imprisoned
40	Ibrāhīm b. al-Ḥasan	Ḥasanid	172/173	Resemblance to the Prophet	Imprisoned
41	Abū Bakr b. al-Ḥasan	Ḥasanid	X/173	X	Imprisoned
42	‘Alī b. al-Ḥasan	Ḥasanid	174–178/178	Many	Imprisoned
43	‘Abdallāh b. al-Ḥasan	Ḥasanid	X/179	X	Imprisoned
44	Al-‘Abbās b. al-Ḥasan	Ḥasanid	179/180	<i>Min fityān</i>	Imprisoned
45	Ismā‘īl b. Ibrāhīm	Ḥasanid	180/180	<i>Ṣabr</i>	Imprisoned
46	Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm	Ḥasanid	181/181	Handsome	Killed
47	‘Alī b. Muḥammad	Ḥasanid	X/182	X	Imprisoned
48	Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh	‘Uthmānid	182/182	‘Abdallāh b. al-Ḥasan’s love for him	Imprisoned
49	A son of Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh al-Nafs al-Zakiyya	Ḥasanid	X/205	X	Killed
50	Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh al-Nafs al-Zakiyya	Ḥasanid	206–207/229–244	Many	Killed
51	Al-Ḥasan b. Mu‘āwiya	Ja‘farid	X/268-269	X	Revolted with

¹⁰³³ That is, ‘Abdallāh b. Mu‘āwiya.

					fifty men, imprisoned until the death of al-Manṣūr
52	ʿAbdallāh al-Aṣghar b. al-Ḥasan	Ḥasanid	X/268–269	X	Killed
53	Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbdallāh	Ḥasanid		Similarity to his brother, al-Nafs al-Zakiyya	Killed
54	Al-Ḥusayn b. Zayd	Ḥusaynid	X/333	X	Killed
55	Mūsā b. ʿAbdallāh	Ḥasanid	X/336	X	Imprisoned or in hiding
56	ʿAlī b. al-Ḥasan	ʿAlid	X/340	X	Imprisoned until the caliphate of al-Mahdī; his reports are in another book
57	Ḥamza b. Ishāq	Jaʿfarid	X/340	X	Imprisoned
58	ʿAlī b. al-ʿAbbās	Ḥasanid	X/342	X	Poisoned
59	ʿĪsā b. Zayd	Ḥusaynid	345/345	Many	Hiding
60	Al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī	Ḥasanid	366–371/372	Prophetic <i>ḥadīth</i>	Killed
61	Sulaymān b. ʿAbdallāh	Ḥasanid	X/365–382	X	Killed
62	Al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad	Ḥasanid	X/365	X	Killed
63	ʿAbdallāh b. Ishāq	Ḥasanid	X/365	X	Killed
64	Yahyā b. ʿAbdallāh	Ḥasanid	388/401–404	Good conduct; rightly-guided	Imprisoned and killed
65	Idrīs b. ʿAbdallāh	Ḥasanid	X/407–409	X	Poisoned
66	ʿAbdallāh b. al-Ḥasan	Ḥusaynid	X/410–411	X	Killed
67	Muḥammad b. Yahyā	Ḥasanid	X/411–412	X	Imprisoned
68	Al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAbdallāh	Jaʿfarid	X/412	X	Killed (lashed to death)
69	Al-ʿAbbās b. Muḥammad	Ḥusaynid	X/413	X	Killed (lashed to death)
70	Mūsā b. Jaʿfar	Ḥusaynid	413–414/414–418	Kindness	Killed
71	Ishāq b. al-Ḥasan	Ḥasanid	X/418	X	Imprisoned
72	Muḥammad b. Muḥammad	Ḥasanid	X/422	X	Killed
73	Al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥusayn	Ḥusaynid	X/423	X	Killed
74	Al-Ḥasan b. Ishāq	Ḥusaynid	X/423	X	Killed
75	Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn	Ḥusaynid	X/423	X	Killed
76	ʿAlī b. ʿAbdallāh	Jaʿfarid	X/423	X	Killed
77	Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar	Ḥusaynid	438–439/439–441	Good	Killed
78	ʿAbdallāh b. Jaʿfar	Ḥasanid	X/453	X	Killed
79	ʿAlī al-Riḍā	Ḥusaynid	X/454–460	X	Poisoned
80	Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh	Ḥusaynid	X/461	X	Poisoned
81	Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim	Ḥusaynid	465/468–473	A good, virtuous Jārūdī Zaydī	In hiding
82	ʿAbdallāh b. al-Ḥusayn	Jaʿfarid	X/473	X	Killed
83	Muḥammad b. Ṣāliḥ	Ḥasanid	480/480–486	<i>Min fityān</i>	Imprisoned
84	Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar	Ḥusaynid	X/490–491	X	Imprisoned
85	Al-Qāsim b. ʿAbdallāh	Ḥusaynid	491/491–492	<i>Fāḍil</i>	Poisoned
86	Aḥamd b. ʿĪsā	Ḥusaynid	492/498	<i>Fāḍil</i> , <i>ʿālim</i>	In hiding
87	ʿAbdallāh b. Mūsā	Ḥasanid	X/501	X	In hiding
88	Yahyā b. ʿUmar	Ḥusaynid	506, 511–	Justice; good	Killed

			521/508–510	conduct	
89	Al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad	Ḥusaynid	521/521	Bad	Imprisoned
90	Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar	Ḥasanid	X/522	X	Imprisoned
91	Ismāʿīl b. Yūsuf	Ḥasanid	524/524	Evil	Killed
92	Al-Ḥasan b. Yūsuf	Ḥasanid	X/525	X	Killed with 91
93	Jaʿfar b. ʿĪsā	Jaʿfarid	X/525	X	Killed with 91
94	Aḥmad b. ʿAbdallāh	Ḥasanid	X/525	X	Killed
95	ʿĪsā b. Ismāʿīl	Jaʿfarid	X/525	X	Imprisoned
96	Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad	Ḥusaynid	X/525	X	Killed
97	Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad	ʿAlid	X/526	X	Killed
98	Aḥmad b. Muḥammad	Ḥasanid	X/526	X	Imprisoned
99	ʿAlī b. Zayd	Ḥusaynid	528/528	Bad; the Zaydīs and the virtuous did not like him	Killed
100	Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim	ʿAlid	X/529	X	Killed (revolted with 99)
101	Tāḥir b. Aḥmad	Ḥasanid	X/529	X	Killed
102	Al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad	Ḥasanid	X/530	X	Killed
103	Yahyā b. ʿAlī	Ḥasanid	X/530	X	Killed
104	Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan	Ḥasanid	X/530	X	Imprisoned
105	Jaʿfar b. Ishāq	Ḥusaynid	X/530	X	Killed
106	Mūsā b. ʿAbdallāh	Ḥasanid	531/531	<i>Ḥadīth</i>	Poisoned
107	ʿĪsā b. Ismāʿīl	Jaʿfarid	X/531	X	Imprisoned
108	Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh	Jaʿfarid	X/531	X	Killed
109	ʿAlī b. Mūsā	Ḥasanid	X/532	X	Imprisoned
110	Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn	Ḥasanid	X/532	X	Imprisoned
111	ʿAlī b. Mūsā	Ḥusaynid	X/532	X	Imprisoned
112	Ibrāhīm b. Mūsā	Ḥasanid	X/532	X	Imprisoned
113	ʿAbdallāh b. Muḥammad	Ḥasanid	X/533	X	Imprisoned
114	Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh	Ḥasanid	X/536	X	Killed
115	Aḥmad b. Muḥammad	Ḥusaynid	X/536	X	Imprisoned
116	ʿUbaydallāh b. ʿAlī	Ḥusaynid	X/536–537	X	Killed
117	ʿAlī b. Ibrāhīm	Ḥusaynid	X/537	X	Killed
118	Muḥammad b. Aḥmad	ʿAlid	X/537	X	Killed
119	Ḥamza b. al-Ḥasan	Jaʿfarid	X/537–538	X	Killed
120	Ḥamza b. ʿĪsā	Ḥasanid	X/538	X	Killed
121	Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan	Ḥusaynid	X/538	X	Killed
122	Ibrāhīm b. al-Ḥasan	Ḥusaynid	X/538	X	Killed
123	Al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad	Ḥusaynid	X/538	X	Killed
124	Ismāʿīl b. ʿAbdallāh	Jaʿfarid	X/538	X	Killed
125	Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn	Ḥasanid	X/538	X	Imprisoned
126	Mūsā b. Mūsā	Ḥasanid	X/539	X	Imprisoned
127	Muḥammad b. Aḥmad	Ḥusaynid	X/539	X	Imprisoned
128	Aḥmad b. Muḥammad	Ḥusaynid	X/539	X	Imprisoned
129	Al-Ḥusayn b. Ibrāhīm	Ḥasanid	X/540	X	Died in captivity
130	Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh	Ḥasanid	X/540	X	Imprisoned
131	ʿAlī b. Mūsā	Ḥusaynid	X/540	X	Imprisoned
132	ʿAbdallāh b. Mūsā	Ḥusaynid	X/540	X	Imprisoned
133	ʿAlī b. Jaʿfar	Ḥasanid	X/540	X	Imprisoned
134	Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh	Jaʿfarid	X/540	X	Imprisoned

135	Muḥammad b. Zayd (<i>ṣāḥib Ṭabaristān, al-dāʿī</i>)	Ḥasanid	X/542	X	Killed
136	Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh	ʿAlid	X/543	X	Imprisoned
137	Muḥammad b. ʿAlī	Ḥusaynid	X/546	X	Killed
138	ʿAlī b. Muḥammad	ʿAlid	X/546	X	Killed
139	Zayd b. al-Ḥusayn	Ḥusaynid	547/546–547	Good	Killed
140	Muḥammad b. Ḥamza	ʿAlid	X/548	X	Killed
141	Al-ʿAbbās b. Ishāq	Ḥusaynid	X/550	X	Killed
142	Al-Muḥassin b. Jaʿfar	Ḥusaynid	X/550	X	Killed
143	Ṭāḥir b. Yaḥyā	Ḥusaynid	551/551	<i>Sayyid fāḍil</i>	Poisoned
144	An unknown Ṭālibid	?	X/551	X	Killed in the conflict between the ʿAbbāsids and the Ṭālibids
145	Ibn al-Ḥibbānī and his son	?	X/551	X	Killed
146	The Banū al-Ukhayḍir, in Yamāma, allied with the Qarāmiṭa	?	X/551-552	X	Killed

Table A.1. A List of the Ṭālibids

Total: 146 subjects

Jaʿfarid : 20 (13.69%)

ʿAqīlid : 7 (4.70%)

ʿAlid : 16 (10.95%)

Ḥusaynid: 43 (29.45%)

Ḥasanid: 52 (35.61%)

Others: an ʿUthmānid; 3 unknown; ʿAlī; al-Ḥasan; al-Ḥusayn; Jaʿfar (8)

Appendix Two: The Manuscripts of the *Aghānī*

The manuscripts of the *Aghānī* consulted during this research are: first, the manuscripts from the Fayḍallāh collection (Fe, hereafter), held in the Millet Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi in Istanbul, the earliest of which were copied in 526/1132; second, the manuscripts from the Oriental Collection in British Library (Or, hereafter)¹⁰³⁴; third, the manuscripts from the Atıf Efendi collection (At, hereafter); fourth, the manuscripts from the Nuruosmaniye Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi (Nur, hereafter). The last two are currently held at the Süleymaniye Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi.¹⁰³⁵ In what follows, a description of each manuscript is given, with reference made to its date, folio number, and general features. It will start with the Fe collection, then cover the Or, the At, and, finally, the Nur.

There are nine manuscripts of the *Aghānī* held in the Fe collection: Fe1561–1569. They differ in size, length, script, and style. The table below gives the date and folio number of each manuscript. The third column gives an overview of its features and content.¹⁰³⁶

Mss.	Dates ¹⁰³⁷	Folios ¹⁰³⁸	Contour and Content
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¹⁰³⁴ It should be noted that the manuscripts in London are currently held by the British Library instead of the British Museum, unlike what is noted by Fuat Sezgin; see footnote 1037.

¹⁰³⁵ If I understood the kind Turks correctly, it appears that the Atıf Efendi Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi was sold and turned into a restaurant. All of its collections are currently kept at the Süleymaniye.

¹⁰³⁶ I would like to express my gratitude to my colleague, Francesco Cappellari, who identified the calligraphic styles of each manuscript and whose expertise in this regard has been indispensable to my understanding the material.

¹⁰³⁷ Sezgin, *Geschichte*, vl.1, 381–382.

¹⁰³⁸ For the folio numbers, I follow Sezgin; see footnote 1037. However, the folio numbers in Fe1561 and Fe1564, provided by the T. C. Ministry of Culture and Tourism, are different: 359 and 430 respectively; available at:

Fe1561	526 /1132	369	It is in two parts; the headings of the first are written in black, while those of the second are in red <i>naskh</i> ; <i>ṣawt</i> all written in black <i>naskh</i> ; all script written with partial <i>tashkīl</i> ; the <i>fihrist</i> page, at the beginning, is adorned
Fe1562	526	482	Like Fe1561; titles written in red ink
Fe1563	526	333	As Fe1561
Fe1564	526	429	As Fe1561
Fe1565	657/1259	196	Prefaced by a <i>fihrist</i> page and an illustration; titles written in black <i>thuluth</i> scripts framed with gold lines; big, black <i>naskh</i> scripts with thorough <i>tashkīl</i> ; <i>ṣawt</i> written in golden ink; given that the scripts are carefully written, probably by a skilful scribe, and beautifully adorned, this Ms. might have been produced under patronage
Fe1566	657	197	As Fe1565; prefaced by a <i>fihrist</i> and the same illustration
Fe1567	ND	98	Titles written in <i>thuluth</i> , while text is in small <i>naskh</i> scripts without <i>tashkīl</i> ; all written in black; each report is preceded by a circular mark like this: ☉
Fe1568	628/1231	264	All in black <i>naskh</i> scripts, with influence of <i>nasta'liq</i> , with partial <i>tashkīl</i> ; <i>ṣawt</i> in bold
Fe1569	650/1253	208	All in black; titles written in <i>thuluth</i> ; text written in <i>naskh</i> with <i>tashkīl</i> ; each report is preceded by a triangular mark

Table A.2. The Manuscripts from the Fayḍallāh Collection

According to the table above, the manuscripts from the Fayḍallāh collection may have been copied by different scribes. Fe1561–Fe1564 were all copied in 526 and are similar in terms of style and script. Fe1565 and Fe1566 can be seen to be a set. The rest, Fe1567, Fe1568, and Fe1569, should have been produced separately. As a result, these manuscripts' text sometimes overlap with one another.

Fe1561 is divided into two parts. The first part ranges from the article about 'Allūya to that about Abū al-Aswad, corresponding to the last two articles of vl.11 and the majority of vl.12, in the printed edition. The second part starts with the article about Ḥabbāba and ends with that about al-Nu'mān b. Bashīr, following the order of vl.15 and vl.16, but slightly different in division.

Fe1562 is divided into three parts. The first part starts with ‘Antara’s article, which is located in vl.8 of the printed edition. However, the second article, on al-Mughīra b. Shu‘ba, and those following it (as far as the article about Dhāt al-Khāl) are found in vl.16. The second part does not adhere to the order of any particular volume. Hence, all the articles are listed here and the volumes to which they belong in the printed edition is marked in brackets: Jamīl (vl.8), Yazīd al-Ṭathriyya (vl.8), Jamīla (vl.8), Ḥāritha b. Badr (vl.8), Abū Dulaf (vl.8), Sa‘īd b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān (vl.8), al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī (vl.7), al-Burdān (vl.8), al-Akḥṭal (vl.8), Sā’ib Khāthir (vl.8), Jarādatay ‘Abdallāh (vl.8), Mutayyam al-Hāshimīyya (vl.7), and Sallāmat al-Qass (vl.8).¹⁰³⁹ The third part begins with the article about al-‘Abbās b. al-Aḥnaf, which is found right after that of Sallāmat al-Qass in vl.8. The rest of the articles match the order of vl.9, from Kuthayyir to al-Wāthiq.

Fe1563 comprises the articles from Abū ‘Aṭā’ al-Sindī in vl.17 to ‘Uwayf in vl.19, as per the order of the printed edition.

Fe1564 consists of two parts. The first part extends from the article about Khālīd al-Kātib in vl.20 to that about Hudba b. Khashram in vl.21. The division of the articles is slightly different from the printed edition. The second part, however, begins with the article about Mānī al-Mawaswis from vl.23 and ends within that about ‘Umāra, from vl.24.

¹⁰³⁹ The order of vl.8 of the printed edition: Jarīr, Jamīl, Yazīd b. al-Ṭathriyya, Jamīla, ‘Antara, ‘Abd Qays al-Burjumī, Abū Dulaf, Sa‘īd b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, al-Burdān, al-Akḥṭal, Sā’ib Khāthir, Jarādatay ‘Abdallāh b. Jad‘ān, Sallāmat al-Qass, al-‘Abbās b. al-Aḥnaf, and Ḥāritha b. Badr; see: al-Iṣḥāhānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.8, 322.

Fe1565 ranges from the article about Ta'abbata Sharran from vl.21 to that about Zuhayr al-Sakb from vl.22.

Fe1566 starts with the article about Mukhāriq (the last article in vl.18) and then continues with the article about Abū al-Miḥjan al-Thaqafī from vl.19 and stops at that about al-Taymī, from vl.20.

Fe1567 begins in the middle of the article about Jarīr, from vl.8, and continues with the rest of the articles from this volume until that about Sa'īd b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān, from vl.8. However, the article about 'Antara has been replaced by that on Ḥāritha b. Badr.¹⁰⁴⁰

Fe1568's first page is damaged; hence, it is likely that its *fihrist* page has been dropped. It begins somewhere in the article about Marwān b. Abī Ḥafṣa, from vl.10, and ends with that about al-Uqayshir from vl.11, but the articles about al-Ḥārith b. Ḥilliz, 'Amr b. Kulthūm and Aws b. Ḥajar are missing in this manuscript.

Fe1569 opens with the rest of the article about Dhū al-Iṣba' and continues with vl.3 down to Ḥassān b. Thābit in vl.4. Its order is the same as that of the printed edition.

The Mss. in British Library consist of four volumes: Or 2075, Or2076, Or2077, and Or2078, which all date back to the sixth Hijrī century and were possessed by the Fāṭimid caliph, al-Zāfir (r. 544–549/1149–1154), as inscribed on the front page. All the manuscripts are small in A5 size approximately, written in *naskh* scripts, without

¹⁰⁴⁰ For the order of vl.8 of the printed edition, see: footnote 1039.

any decoration. The similarity among these manuscripts suggests that they may have been copied by the same scribe. Each respectively corresponds with different parts of the printed edition.

Or2075 has 164 folios, beginning in the middle of Nuṣayb's article and ending in that about Ibn 'Ā'isha. Thus, it covers the later part of vl.1 and the first half of vl.2. The order of Or2075 is not different from that of the printed edition.

Or2076 contains 167 folios, including a contents page. It begins with the article about Abū al-'Atāhiyya and ends somewhere in the article about al-Dallāl. Its order matches that of vl.4 of the printed edition.

Or2077 has 169 folios, with a *fihrist* page. It begins with the article about Shurayḥ and follows up with Bint Ḥadīr, al-Ḥuṭay'a with Sa'īd b. al-'Āṣ, Mālik b. Asmā', the death of Muḥammad b. 'Urwa, Zayd al-Khayl, 'Ubaydallāh b. Qays al-Ruqayyāt, Find, Nubayh, a song of Yazīd, a song of Umayyad b. Abī al-Ṣalt, Ḥassān b. Thābit, Abū 'Aṭā' al-Sindī, Ḥātim, Dhū Rumma, the death of al-Zubayr, Danānīr, and part of Khufāf's article. It covers parts of vl.17 and vl.18. The division of the articles is slightly different from that in the printed edition, but the order is the same.

Or2078 has 128 folios, beginning in the article about al-Farazdaq and continuing with Khālīd b. 'Abdallāh al-Qasrī, Ṣakhr b. al-Ja'd, Abū Ja'far al-Shaṭranj,¹⁰⁴¹ the war of al-Fijār, Mālik, 'Abīd al-Abrāṣ, and Rabī'a b. Maqrūm. It ends with the article addressing the Jews settled in Medina. The corresponding volumes are vl.21 and

¹⁰⁴¹ In the printed edition, it is Abū Ḥafṣ al-Shaṭranj: al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.22, 261.

vl.22, without any difference from the order of the printed edition.

There are three manuscripts from the Atıf Efendi Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi, At2000–At2002, all dating back to 1267–1268/1850–1851.¹⁰⁴² At2000–At2002 are all written in small *nasta‘līq*, without *tashkīl*. The text is written in black ink, but *shi‘r*, *ṣawt*, key phrases in *isnāds*, and titles are in red. These three manuscripts (At2000–At2002) are similar to the printed edition and match its order. At2000, At2001, and At2002, respectively comprising 498, 615, and 547 folios, are continuous, from the preface to the *Aghānī* in vl.1 to the article about ‘Abdallāh b. Muṣ‘ab in vl.24.

There are eight manuscripts from the Nuruosmaniye Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi, according to Sezgin.¹⁰⁴³ However, I only found Nur3657, Nur3659, Nur3660, and Nur3661. Their dates, folio numbers, and corresponding volumes are listed below.

Nur3657, with 725 folios, was produced in 1140/1727. It ranges from the preface from vl.1 to the article about the death of Zuhayr b. Jadhīma in vl.11. The preface page is adorned with *tezhip* of different colours. The scripts are small, in black, without *tashkīl*, while titles of articles, key phrases in *isnāds* (usually *akhbaranī*), and *ṣawt* are in red. The titles are written in *thuluth*. The text is framed within a square consisting of two red lines and one gold line. The text, especially the poetry, is written to careful measurement, in order to maintain the space between lines as marked by red dots.

¹⁰⁴² Sezgin, *Geschichte*, vl.1, 381–382. The dates are recorded in the manuscripts.

¹⁰⁴³ *Ibid.*

Nur3659, with 732 folios, was made in 1156/1743. It begins with the preface from vl.1 and, like Nur3657, ends in the article about Zuhayr b. Jadhīma in vl.11. The style and the scripts are similar to those of Nur3657, but some of its titles are written in green and the *tezhip* on the preface page is different. The frame of the text is a square of two red lines. Only the preface page is framed in gold.

Nur3660, comprising 655 folios, is the second volume of Nur3659; thus their scripts, colour, and style are the same. It starts with where Nur3659 ends — in vl.11 — and stops in the article about ‘Umāra b. ‘Aqīl of vl.24. In other words, Nur3659 and Nur3660 basically cover the whole *Aghānī*, except for the last article about al-Mutalammis, which is the last article in the printed edition.

Nur3661 consists of 718 folios, without any date. It has a *fihrist* page in the front; it begins with the preface from vl.1 and ends with the article about al-Muraqqish al-Aṣghar from vl.6. The preface page is adorned with *tezhip*. The scripts are small, in black, clearly different from the other Nur manuscripts, without *tashkīl*. Titles are in red, while reports and verses are divided by red dots. The text is framed with thick gold lines.

Appendix Three: Textual Comparison

This appendix compares one short and one long article, about al-Muhājir b. Khālīd and al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī. These articles are compared with Fe 1562 (526/1132). While the article about al-Muhājir hardly differs from that in this manuscript, there are more divergences in that about al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī. The profile and the reports in the beginning section of the article about al-Sayyid are different from those in the printed edition, apart from scribal errors and divergences in the *isnāds*. Nonetheless, their gist, especially that of al-Iṣfahānī's comments, and the overarching structure do not suggest that this part comes from an entirely different recension of the text. Two additional *isnāds* for two pro-Shī'ī reports are missing in this manuscript (see M1 and M2 below). It seems that the copyist, who displays Sunnī sympathies, omitted them, although we cannot exclude the possibility of scribal negligence. The manuscript clarifies the obscurities and the reports' less sensible order in the printed edition.

The words in the square brackets are not found in Fe1562. The parenthetical brackets mark the additions found in the manuscript. The underlining indicates differences, explained in footnotes. Note that a footnote may begin from the right, if it is written in Arabic.

أخبار المهاجر بن خالد ونسبه [وأخبار ابنه خالد]

المهاجر بن خالد بن الوليد بن المغيرة بن عبد الله بن عمر بن مخزوم بن يقظة بن مرة بن كعب بن لؤي بن

غالب. وكان الوليد بن المغيرة سيداً من سادات قريش، وجواداً من جوادئها . وكان يُلقب بالوحيد. وامه صخرة بنت الحارث بن عبد الله بن عبد شمس، امرأة من بجيله، ثم من قسر. ولما مات الوليد بن المغيرة أرخت قريش بوفاته مدة، لإعظامها إياه، حتى كان عام الفيل، فلهو تاريخاً. هكذا ذكر ابن دأب.

وأما الزبير بن بكار فذكر عن عمرو بن أبي بكر المؤملي، أنها كانت تؤرخ بوفاة هشام بن المغيرة تسع سنين، إلى أن كانت السنة التي بنوا فيها الكعبة (الكعبة)¹⁰⁴⁴، فأرخوا بها. ولخالد بن الوليد من الشهرة بصحبة رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم¹⁰⁴⁵ والغناء في حروبه المحل المشهور، ولقبه رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم¹⁰⁴⁶ سيف الله، وهاجر إلى النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم¹⁰⁴⁷ قبل الفتح وبعد الحديبية هو وعمرو بن العاص وعثمان بن طلحة. فقال: النبي صلى الله عليه [وسلم] لما رآهم: رمتكم مكة بأفلاذ كبدها. وشهد فتح مكة مع النبي صلى الله عليه [وسلم]؛ فكان أول من دخلها في مهاجرة العرب من أسفل مكة، وشهد¹⁰⁴⁸ مؤته. فلما قتل زيد بن حارثة وجعفر بن أبي طالب وعبد الله بن رواحة، ورأى الا طاقة للمسلمين بالقوم، انحاز بهم، وحامى عليهم حتى سلموا، فلقبه يومئذ رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم¹⁰⁴⁹: سيف الله.

حدثنا بذلك أجمع الحرمي بن أبي العلاء والطوسي عن الزبير بن بكار.

وكان خالد يوم حنين في مقدمة رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم¹⁰⁵⁰ ومعه بنو سليم، فأصابته جراح كثيرة، فأتاه بعد هزيمة المشركين، فنفت على جراحه، فاندنلت ونهض. وله آثار في قتال أهل الردة، في أيام أبي بكر رضي الله عنه مشهورة، بطول ذكرها. وهو فتح الحيرة، بعث إليه أهلها عبد المسيح [بن عمرو] بن ببيعة، فكلمه خالد، فقال له: من أين أقبلت؟ قال: من ورائي. قال: وأين تريد؟ قال: أمامي. قال: ابن كم أنت؟ قال: ابن رجل وامرأة.

قال: فأين أقصى أترك؟ قال: منهي عمري. قال: أتعتل؟ قال: نعم، وأفيد. قال: ما هذه الحصون؟ قال: بنيناها

¹⁰⁴⁴ Two *al-Ka'ba*, perhaps a scribal error.

¹⁰⁴⁵ النبي صلى الله عليه وآله

¹⁰⁴⁶ صلى الله عليه وآله

¹⁰⁴⁷ رسول الله عليه السلام

¹⁰⁴⁸ *Yawm* is added on the margin

¹⁰⁴⁹ رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله يومئذ

¹⁰⁵⁰ النبي صلى الله عليه وآله

نتقي بها السفية حتى يردعه الحليم. قال: لأمر ما اختارك قومك، ما هذا في يدك؟ قال: سم ساعة. قال: وما تصنع به؟ قال: أردت أن أنظر ما تردني به: فإن بلغت ما فيه صلاح لقومي عدت إليهم، وإلا شربته، فقتلت نفسي، ولم أرجع إلى قومي بما يكرهون. فقال له خالد: أرنيه. فناوله إياه. فقال خالد باسم الله الذي لا يضر مع اسمه شيء في الأرض ولا في السماء، وهو السميع العليم، ثم أكله، فتجلتته غشية، ثم أفاق يمسح العرق عن وجهه.

فرجع ابن بقبلة إلى قومه،¹⁰⁵¹ فأخبرهم بذلك، وقال: ما هؤلاء القوم إلا من الشياطين، وما لكم بهم طاقة، فصالحوهم هلى ما يريدون. ففعلوا.

أخبرني بذلك إبراهيم بن السري، عن يحيى التميمي، عن أبيه، عن شعيب بن سيف، وأخبرني به الحسن بن علي عن الحارث بن محمد عن محمد بن سعد¹⁰⁵²، عن الواقدي. وأمره أبو بكر على جنيع الجيوش التي بعثها إلى الشام لحرب الروم، وفيهم أبو عبيدة بن الجراح ومعاذ بن جبل، فرضوا به وبإمارته.

قالوا: وكان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم¹⁰⁵³ قد حلق رأسه ذات يوم، فأخذ خالد شعره، فجعله في قلنسوة له، فكان لا يلقى جيشاً وهي عليه إلا هزمه.

وروى عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم¹⁰⁵⁴ الحديث، وحمل عنه. وراه النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم¹⁰⁵⁵ متديلاً من هرشى فقال: نعم الرجل خالد بن الوليد.

أخبرنا بذلك الطوسي والحرمي قالوا: حدثنا الزبير بن بكار قال: حدثني يعقوب بن محمد عن عبد العزيز بن محمد، عن عبد الواحد بن أبي عون، عن أبي سعيد المقبري، عن أبي هريرة: أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال ذلك له.

قال الزبير: وحدثني محمد بن سلام، عن أبان بن عثمان قال: لما مات خالد بن الوليد لم تبق امرأة من بني المغيرة إلا وضعت لمتها على قبره، يعني حلفت رأسها، ووضعت شعرها على قبره.

قال ابن سلام: وقال يونس النحوي: إن عمر رضي الله عنه قال حينئذ: دعوا نساء بني المغيرة يبيكين أبا

¹⁰⁵¹ فرجع إلى قومه ابن بقبلة

¹⁰⁵² الحارث بن محمد بن محمد بن سعد

¹⁰⁵³ صلى الله عليه وآله

¹⁰⁵⁴ صلى الله عليه وآله

¹⁰⁵⁵ صلى الله عليه وآله

سليمان، ويرقن من دموعهن سجلاً أو سجلين، ما لم يكن نقع أو لقلقة قال: والنقع: مد الصوت بالنحيب.

واللققة: حركة اللسان بالولولة ونحوها.

قال الزبير، فيما ذكره لي من رويت عنه: حدثني محمد بن الضحاك عن أبيه: أن عمر بن الخطاب [رضي الله عنه] كان أشبه الناس بخالد بن الوليد، فخرج عمر سحراً، فلقبه شيخ، فقال له: مرحباً بك يا أبا سليمان، فنظر إليه عمر، فإذا هو علقمة بن علاثة، فرد عليه السلام. فقال له علقمة (بن علاثة): عزلك عمر بن الخطاب؟ فقال له عمر: نعم. قال: ما شيع، لا أشيع الله بطنه! قال له عمر: فما عندك؟ قال: ما عندي إلا السمع والطاعة. فلما أصبح عمر دعا بخالد، وحضره علقمة بن علاثة، فأقبل على خالد، فقال له: ماذا قال لك علقمة؟ قال: ما قال لي شيئاً. قال: اصدقني. فحلف خالد بالله ما لقيه، ولا قال له شيئاً. فقال له علقمة: حلا أبا سليمان. فتبسم عمر، فعلم خالد أن علقمة قد غلط، فنظر إليه، وفطن علقمة، فقال له: قد كان ذلك يا أمير المؤمنين، فاعف عني، عفا الله عنك. فضحك عمر وأخبره الخبر.

أخبرني عمي قال: حدثني أحمد بن الحارث الخراز قال: حدثنا المدائني، عن شيخ من أهل الحجاز، عن زيد بن رافع مولى المهاجر بن خالد بن الوليد، وعن أبي ذئب، عن أبي سهيل أو ابن سهيل: أن معاوية لما أراد أن يظهر العهد ليزيد، قال لأهل الشام: إن [أمير] المؤمنين قد كبرت سنة، ورق جلده، ودق عظمه، واقترب أجله، ويريد أن يستخلف عليكم، فمن ترون؟ فقالوا: عبد الرحمن بن خالد بن الوليد. فسكت وأضررها، ودرس ابن أثال الطبيب إليه، فسقاه سمّاً فمات. وبلغ ابن أخيه خالد بن المهاجر بن خالد بن الوليد خبره وهو بمكة، وكان أسوأ الناس رأياً في عمه، لأن أباه المهاجر كان مع علي عليه السلام بصفين، وكان عبد الرحمن بن خالد بن الوليد مع معاوية (رضي الله عنه)، وكان خالد بن المهاجر على رأي أبيه: هاشمي المذهب، ودخل مع بني هاشم الشعب، فاضطغن ذلك ابن الزبير عليه، فألقى عليه زق خمر، وصب بعضه على رأسه، وشنع عليه بأنه وجده ثملاً من الخمر، فضربه الحد. فلما قتل عمه عبد الرحمن مر به عروة بن الزبير، فقال له: يا خالد: أتدع ابن أثال ينقي أوصال عمك بالشام وأنت بمكة مسبل إزارك، تجره وتخطر فيه متخايلاً؟ فحمي خالد، ودعا مولى له يدعى نافعاً، فأعلمه الخبر، وقال له: لا بد من قتل ابن أثال؛ وكان نافعاً جلدأ شهماً.

فخرجا حتى قدما دمشق، وكان ابن أثال يمسي عند معاوية، فجلس له في مسجد دمشق إلى أسطوانة، وجلس غلامه إلى أخرى، حتى خرج. فقال خالد لنافع: إياك أن تعرض له أنت، فإني أضربه، ولكن احفظ ظهري،

واكفني من ورائي، فإن رابك شيء يريدني من ورائي فشأنك. فلما حاذاه وثب عليه¹⁰⁵⁶ فقتله، وثار إليه من كان معه. فصاح بهم نافع فانفرجوا، ومضى خالد ونافع، وتبعهما من كان معه، فلما غشوهما حملاً عليهم، ففترقوا، حتى دخل خالد ونافع زقاقاً ضيقاً، فففاتا القوم. وبلغ معاوية الخر، فقال: هذا خالد بن المهاجر، اقبلوا الزفاق الذي دخل فيه. ففتش عليه، فأتي به. فقال: لا جزاك الله من زائر خيراً، قتلت طيببي. قال: قتلت المأمور وبقي الأمر. فقال له: عليك لعنة الله (أم) لو كان تشهد مرة واحد لقتلتك به، أمعك نافع؟ قال: لا. قال: بلى والله ما اجترأت إلا به. ثم أمر بطلبه فوجد، فأتي به، فضربه مئة سوط. ولم يهج خالداً بشيء أكثر من أن حبسه، وألزم بني مخزوم دية ابن أثال، اثني عشر ألف درهم. [أدخل بيت المال منها ستة آلاف درهم، وأخذ ستة آلاف درهم،] ولم يزل ذلك يجري في دية المعاهد، حتى ولي عمر بن عبد العزيز، فأبطل الذي يأخذه السلطان لنفسه، وأثبت الذي يدخل بيت المال.

وخالد بن المهاجر الذي يقول:

يا صاح يا ذا الضامر العنس

والرحل ذي الأنساع والחס

سير النهار ولست تاركه

وتجد سيراً كلما تمسي

في هذين البيتين وبيت ثالث لم أجده في شعر المهاجر، ولا أدري أهو له أم ألحقه به المغنون، لحنان: ثقيل أول، وخفيف ثقيل. ذكر يونس أن أحدهما لمالك، ولم يذكر طريقة لحنه، ووجدته في جامع غناء معبد، عن الهشامي.

ويحيى المكي له فيه خفيف ثقيل. وهكذا ذكر علي بن يحيى أيضاً، ولعله رواه عن ابن المكي. وإن كان هذا لمعبد صحيحاً، فلحن مالك هو الثقيل الأول. وذكر حبش، وهو ممن لا يحصل قوله: أن لحن معبد ثقيل أول بالوسطى.

¹⁰⁵⁶ إليه

رجع الخبر إلى سيطرة خبر خالد

خالد يحرض عروة بن الزبير على قتل بن جرموز قال: ولما حبس معاوية خالد بن المهاجر قال في الحبس:

إما خطاي تقاربتي

مشى المقيد في الحصار

فبما أمشي في الأبا

طح يقتني أثري إزاري

دع ذا ولكن هل ترى

ناراً تشب بذى مرار

ما إن تشب لقرة

للمصطلين ولا قنار

ما بال ليلك ليس ين

قص طوله طول النهار

لتقاصر الأزمان أم

غرض الأسير من الإِسار؟

قال: فبلغت أبياته معاوية، فرق له وأطلقه. فرجع إلى مكة. فلما قدمها لقي عروة بن الزبير، فقال له: أما ابن أثال فقد قتلته، وذلك ابن جرموز ينقي أوصال الزبير بالبصرة، فاقتله إن كنت ثائراً. فشكاه عروة إلى أبي بكر بن عبد الرحمن بن الحارث بن هشام، فأقسم عليه أن يمسه عنه، ففعل.

أخبرني أحمد بن عبيد الله بن عمار قال: حدثني يعقوب بن نعيم قال: حدثني إسحاق بن محمد قال: حدثني عيسى بن محمد القحطبي قال: حدثني محمد بن الحارث بن يسخر قال: غنى إبراهيم بن المهدي يوماً بحضرة المأمون وأنا حاضر:

يا صاح يا ذا الضامر العنس

والرحل ذي الأفتاب والجلس

قال: وكانت لي جائزة قد خرجت، فقلت: تأمر سيدي يا أمير المؤمنين بإلقاء هذا الصوت علي مكان جائزتي، فهو أحب إلي منها؟ فقال له: يا عم، ألق هذا الصوت على محمد. فألقاه علي حتى إذا كدت أن أخذه قال: اذهب فأنت أحذق الناس به. فقلت: إنه لم يصلح لي بعد. قال: فاغد غداً علي. فغدوت عليه، فأعاده ملتوياً، فقلت له: أيها الأمير، لك في الخلافة ما ليس لأحد؛ أنت ابن الخليفة، وأخو الخليفة، وعم الخليفة، تجود بالרגائب، وتبخل علي بصوت؟ فقال: ما أحملك! إن المأمون لم يستبطني محبة لي، ولا صلة لرحمي، ولا ليرب المعروف عندي، ولكنه سمع من هذا الجرم ما لم يسمعه من غيره. قال: فاعلمت المأمون [بمقالته]. فقال: إنا لا نكدر على أبي إسحاق عفونا عنه¹⁰⁵⁷، فدعه. فلما كانت أيام المعتصم نشط للصباح يوماً، فقال: أحضروا عمي. فجاء في دراعة بغير طيلسان، فأعلمت المعتصم بخبر الصوت سراً، فقال: يا عم غنني:

يا صاح يا ذا الضامر العنس

[والرحل ذي الأقتاب والجلس]

فغناه. فقال: ألقه على محمد، فقال: قد فعلت، وقد سبق مني قول الآ أعيده عليه. ثم كان يتجنب أن يغنيه حيث أحضر.

أقفر بعد الأحبة البلد

فهو كان لم يكن به أحد

شجاك نؤي عفت معالمه

وهامد في العراض ملتبد

أمك عنسية مهذبة

طابت لها الأمهات والقصد

¹⁰⁵⁷ إنا لا نكدر عفونا على أبي إسحاق عفونا عنه

تدعى زهيرية إذا انتسبت

حيث تلاقى الأنساب والعدد

الشعر لحمزة بن بيض، والغناء لمعبد، خفيف ثقيل أول بالسبابة في مجرى الوسطى عن إسحاق. وفيه لا بن عباد ثاني ثقيل بالوسطى عن الهشامي وعمرو وابن المكي.

أخبار السيد الحميري (ونسبه)

السيد [لقبه] (لقب تغلب عليه) . واسمه إسماعيل بن محمد بن يزيد بن ربيعة [بن مفرغ] الحميري. ويكنى أبا هاشم. وأمه امرأة من الأزدي ثم من بني الحدان. وجده يزيد بن ربيعة، شاعر مشهور، وهو الذي هجا زياداً وبنيه ونفاهم عن آل حرب، وحبسه عبيد الله بن زياد لذلك وعذبه، ثم أطلقه معاوية. وخبره في هذا طويل يذكر في موضعه مع سائر أخباره، إذ كان الغرض هنا ذكر أخبار السيد.

ووجدت في بعض الكتب عن إسحاق بن محمد النخعي قال: سمعت ابن عائشة والقحذمي يقولان: هو يزيد بن مفرغ، ومن قال: إنه يزيد بن معاوية فقد أخطأ. ومفرغ لقب ربيعة، لأنه راهن أن يشرب عساً من لبن فشربه حتى فرغه، فلقب مفرغاً. وكان شعاباً بسيلة، ثم صار إلى البصرة.¹⁰⁵⁸

شاعر متقدم مطبوع، وترك شعره لخدمة الصحابة: وكان شاعراً متقدماً مطبوعاً. يقال: أن أكثر الناس شعراً في الجاهلية والإسلام ثلاثة: بشار، وأبو العتاهية، والسيد، فإنه لا يعلم أن أحد قدر على تحصيل شعر أحد منهم أجمع.

وإنما مات ذكره وهجر الناس شعره لما كان يفرط فيه من سب أصحاب رسول الله عليه وسلم وأزواجه في

¹⁰⁵⁸ The order of this paragraph is different and there are variants in wording, although the gist is very much similar:

المعروف بابن مفرغ وهو الذي كان يهجو بني زياد وسيفهم (؟) عن آل حرب وحبسه عبيد الله بن زياد من أجل ذلك وعذبه ثم أطلقه معاوية وله في هذا أخبار كثيرة تذكر في مواضعها من هذا الكتاب مع سائر أخباره إذا الغرض هاهنا ذكر السيد. وقال إسحق بن محمد النخعي حدثني ابن عائشة قال مفرغ هو ربيعة لقب بذلك لأنه راهن ابن مفرغ عساً من لبن فيسربه (؟) فشربه حتى فرغه وكان شعاباً بسيلة ثم انتقل إلى البصرة ومن قال يزيد بن ربيعة بن مفرغ فقد أخطأ. يكنى إسماعيل السيد أبا هاشم وأمه امرأة من الأزدي ثم من الحدان.

شعر ويستعمله من قذفهم والطعن عليهم، فتحومى شعره من هذا الجنس وغيره لذلك، وهجر الناس تخوفاً وترقباً وله طراز من الشعر ومذهب قلما يلحق فيه أو يقاربه. ولا يعرف له من الشعر كثيرٌ. وليس يخلو من مدح بني هاشم أو ذم غيرهم ممن هو عنده ضدٌ لهم. ولولا أن أخباره كلها تجري هذا المجرى ولا تخرج عنه لوجب ألا نذكر منها شيئاً؛ ولكننا شرطنا أن نأتي بأخبار من نذكره من الشعراء؛ فلم نجد بداً من ذكر أسلم ما وجدناه له وأخلاها من سيئ اختياره على قلة ذلك.¹⁰⁵⁹

أخبرني أحمد بن عبيد الله بن عمار قال حدثني علي بن محمد النوفلي عن إسماعيل بن الساحر راوية السيد، قال ابن عمار وحدثني أحمد بن سليمان بن أبي شيخ عن أبيه: أن أبوى السيد كانا إباضيين، وكان منزلهما بالبصرة في غرفة بني ضبة، وكان السيد يقول: طالما سب أمير المؤمنين (علي بن أبي طالب عليه السلام) في هذه الغرفة. فإذا سئل عن التشيع من أين [وقع] له، قال: غاصت علي الرحمة غوصاً. وروي عن السيد أن أبويه لما علما بمذهبه هما بقتله، فأتى عقبة بن سلم الهنائي فأخبره بذلك، [فأجاره وبوأه] (فقال: الزمني ولا تقربهما وأعطى) منزلاً وهبه له، فكان فيه حتى ماتا فورثهما.

A1 (كان السيد يذهب مذهب الكيسانية ويقول بإمامة محمد بن الحنفية بعد الحسن والحسين عليهما السلام وله في ذلك شعر كثير وقد روى بعض من لم يصح روايته أنه رجع عن مذهبه يزاو؟؟ أنه لقي جعفر الصادق فقال إمامته ورجع عن مذهب الكيسانية ورووا في ذلك أشعاراً منها:

تجفرت باسم الله والله أكبر

وأيقنت أن الله يعفو ويغفر

لم نجد ذلك رواية صحيحة ولا قول محصل ولا هذه القصائد من جنس مذهبه في شعره وجزالة ألفاظه لأنها أشعار ضعيفة ركيكة يتبين فيها التوليد وكيسانيته مباينة لها جزالة ومتانة ولها رونق ومعنى ليسا لما يذكر عنه

¹⁰⁵⁹ كان شاعراً مطبوعاً كثيراً. يقال إن أكثر الناس شعراً في الجاهلية والإسلامية ثلاثة بشار وأبو العتاهية والسيد فإنه لا يعلم أحداً قدر على جمع شعر واحد منهم حتى يستوعبه كله وإنما أمات شعره وهجر الناس ذكره إفراطه في سب بعض أصحاب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وبعض أزواجه رضي الله عن جماعتهم وإفحاشه في شتمهم وقذفهم والطعن عليهم فتحامى الرواة شعره وهجروه لهذا خوفاً وتحبوا وليس له شيء من الشعر على كثرة تصرفه فيه وقوله في جميع فنونه إلا وهو موصول بمدح بني هاشم وذم غيرهم ممن هو عنده ضدٌ لهم وأخباره كلها يجري أيضاً هذا المجرى. فأنا أتوفي ذكر ما هذه سبيله منها وأذكر من أسلم ما حضر فيه.

في هذه الأخرى¹⁰⁶⁰

وقد أخبرني الحسن بن علي [البري] عن (حمد بن القاسم البرتي عن) محمد بن عامر عن القاسم بن الربيع عن أبي داود سليمان بن سفيان المعروف بالحنزق¹⁰⁶¹ راوية السيد الحميري قال: ما مضى والله (السيد) على مذهب الكيسانية . وهذه القصائد التي [يقولها] (ينشدها) الناس مثل:

تجفرت باسم الله والله أكبر

و

تجفرت باسم الله فيمن تجعفرا

وقوله:

أيا راكباً نحو المدينة جسرّة

عذافرةً تهوي بها كل سبب

إذا ما هداك الله لاقيت جعفرًا

فقل يا أمين الله وابن المذهب

لغلام للسيد يقال له قاسم الخياط، قالها ونحلها للسيد، وجازت على كثير من الناس ممن لم يعرف خبرها، بمحل قاسم منه وخدمته إياه.

أخبرني أحمد بن عبيد الله بن عمار قال حدثني [علي بن محمد] النوفلي قال حدثني أبو جعفر الأعرج ابن بنت الفضيل بن بشار قال: كان السيد أسمر، تام القامة، أشنب، ذا وفرة، حسن الألفاظ، جميل الخطاب، إذا تحدث في مجلس قوم أعطى كل رجل في المجلس نصيبه من حديثه.

أخبرني [أحمد] (ابن عمار) قال حدثني محمد بن عباد عن أبي عمرو¹⁰⁶² الشيباني عن لبطة بن الفرزدق قال:

¹⁰⁶⁰ Report A1, found in the manuscript, is very close to Report A2 below in the printed edition, despite the differences in wording.

¹⁰⁶¹ المسترق.

¹⁰⁶² حدثني أبو عمرو

تذاكرنا الشعراء عند أبي، فقال: إن ها هنا لرجلين لو أخذنا في معنى الناس لما كنا معهما في شيء. فسألناه من هما؟ فقال: السيد الحميري وعمران بن حطان السدوسي¹⁰⁶³، ولكن الله عز وجل قد شغل كل واحد منهما بالقول في مذهبه.

أخبرني عيسى بن الحسين الوراق قال حدثني علي بن محمد النوفلي قال حدثني أبو جعفر ابن بنت الفضيل بن بشار قال: كان السيد أسمر، تام الخلقة، أشنب، ذا وفرة، حسن الألفاظ، وكان مع ذلك أثنى الناس إبطين، يكاد أحد لا يقدر [أحد] على الجلوس معه لثقل راحتهما.

[قال حدثني التوزي] (أخبرني أبو الحسن الأسدي قال حدثني العباس بن ميمون بن طائع قال حدثني النهدي) قال: رأى (معي) الأصمعي جزءاً فيه من شعر السيد¹⁰⁶⁴، فقال: لمن هذا؟ فسترته عنه لعلمي بما عنده فيه، فأقسم علي أن أخبره فأخبرته، فقال: أنشدني قصيدةً منه، فأنشدته ثم أخرى وهو يستزيدني، ثم قال: [قبحه الله] ما أسلكه لطريق الفحول! [لولا] مذهبه ولولا [ما] لما في شعره ما قدمت عليه أحداً من طبقته. مدح أبو عبيده شعره: أخبرني محمد بن الحسن بن دريد قال حدثنا أبو حاتم قال: سمعت أبا عبيدة يقول: أشعر (الناس من) المحدثين السيد [الحميري] وبشار.

أخبرني عمي قال حدثني الحسن بن عليل العنزي عن أبي شراعة القيسي عن مسعود بن بشر. أن جماعة تذاكروا أمر السيد، وأنه رجع عن مذهبه في (إمامة) ابن الحنفية وقال بإمامة جعفر بن محمد. فقال ابن الساهر راويته: والله ما رجع عن ذلك ولا القصائد الجعفريات إلا منحولةً له قيلت بعده. وآخر عهدي به قبل موته بثلاث وقد سمع رجلاً يروى عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أنه قال لعلي عليه السلام: إنه سيولد [لك] بعدي ولدٌ وقد نحلته اسمي وكنيتي فقال في ذلك وهي آخر قصيدة قالها:

أشأقتك المنازل بعد هند

وتربيها وذات الدل دعد

منازل أفقرت منهن محت

معالمهن من سبلٍ ورعد

وريحٍ حرجفٍ تستن فيها

¹⁰⁶³ عمران بن حطان السدوسي والسيد الحميري.

¹⁰⁶⁴ دفتر شعر السيد الحميري

بسافى¹⁰⁶⁵ الترب تلحم ما تسدي

ألم يبلغك والأنباء تنمي

مقال محمد فيما يؤدي

إلى ذي علمه الهادي على

وخولة خادم في البيت تردي

ألم تر أن خولة سوف تأتي

بوارى الزند صافي الخيم نجد

يفوز بكنيتي واسمي لأنني

نحلتهماه والمهدي بعدي

يغيب عنهم حتى يقولوا

تضمنه بطيبة بطن لحد

سنين وأشهرأ ويرى برضوى

بشعب بين أنمار وأسد

مقيم بين آرام وعين

وحفان تروح خلال ربد

تراعيها السباع وليس منها

ملاقيهن مفترساً بحد

أمن به الردى فرتعن طوراً

بلا خوف لدى مرعى وورد

حلفت برب مكة والمصلى

وبيت طاهر الأركان فرد

يطوف به الحجيج وكل عام

يحل لديه وفد بعد وفد

¹⁰⁶⁵ بهابي؟؟

لقد كان ابن خولة غير شك
صفاء ولايتي وخلوص ودي
فما أهدأ أحب إلي فيما
أسر وما أبوح به وأبدي
سوى ذي الوحي أحمد¹⁰⁶⁶ أو علي
ولا أركى وأطيب منه عندي
ومن ذا يا بن خولة إذ رمتني
بأسهمها المنية حين وعدي
يذنب عنكم ويسد مما
تتلم من حصونكم كسدي
وما لي أن أمر به ولكن
أؤمل أن يؤخر يوم فقدي
فأدرك دولة لك لست فيها
بجبار فتوصف بالتعدي
على قوم بغوا فيكم علينا
لتعدي منكم يا خير معد
لتعل بنا عليهم حيث كانوا
بغور من تهامة أو بنجد
إذا ما سرت من بلد حرام
إلى من بالمدينة من معد
وماذا غرهم والخير منهم
بأشوس أعصل الأنبياء ورد
وأنت لمن بغى وعداً وأذكى

¹⁰⁶⁶ أحمداً؟ يبدو أنه تصحيف الناسخ.

في البيتين الأولين من هذه القصيدة [غناء، نسبته: صوت

أشأقتك المنازل بعد هند

وترببها وذات الدل دعد

منازل أقفرت منهن محت

معالمهن من سبلٍ ورعد

عروضه من الوافر. الشعر للسيد الحميري.] والغناء لمعبد ثقيلٌ أول بالسبابة [في مجرى] (و) البنصر عن

يحيى المكي. وذكر الهشامي أنه لكردم. وذكر عمرو بن بانه [أن اللحن] (أنه) لمالك [ثقلٌ أول] بالوسطى.

A2 [وقال إسماعيل بن الساجر راوية السيد: كنت عنده يوماً في جناح له، فأجال بصره فيه ثم قال: يا

إسماعيل، طال والله ما شتم أمير المؤمنين عليّ في هذا الجناح. قلت: ومن كان يفعل؟ قال: أبواي. وكان يذهب

مذهب الكيسانية ويقول بإمامة محمد بن الحنفية، وله في ذلك شعر كثير. وقد روى بعض من لم تصح روايته

أنه رجع عن مذهبه وقال بمذهبه الإمامية، وله في ذلك:

تجعفرت باسم الله والله أكبر

وأيقنت أن الله يعفو ويغفر

وما وجدنا ذلك في رواية محصل، ولا شعره أيضاً من هذا الجنس ولا في هذا المذهب، لأن هذا شعر ضعيفٌ

يتبين التوليد فيه، وشعره في قصائده الكيسانية مباينٌ لهذا جزالةً ومتانةً، وله رونق ومعنى ليسا لما يذكر عنه

في غيره.¹⁰⁶⁷

أخبرني علي بن سليمان الأخفش قال حدثنا محمد بن يزيد [الثمالي] قال حدثني التوزي قال قال لي الأصمعي:

أحب أن تأتيني بشيء من شعر هذا الحميري فعل الله به وفعل، فأتيت به شيء منه، فقرأه فقال: قاتله الله! ما

أطبعه وأسلكه لسبيل الشعراء¹⁰⁶⁸! والله لولا ما في شعره من سب السلف لما تقدمه من طبقة أحد.¹⁰⁶⁹

¹⁰⁶⁷ In the manuscript, Report A2 is not found.

¹⁰⁶⁸ لطريق الشعراء

أخبرني أحمد بن عبد العزيز الجوهري قال حدثنا عمر بن شبة قال: أتيت أبا عبيدة معمر بن المثنى يوماً وعنده رجلٌ من بني هاشم يقرأ عليه كتاباً، فلما رأيته أطبقه. فقال له أبو عبيدة: إن أبا زيد ليس ممن يحتشم منه، فأقرأ. فأخذ¹⁰⁷⁰ الكتاب وجعل يقرؤه، فإذا هو شعر السيد. فجعل أبو عبيدة يعجب منه ويستحسنه. قال أبو زيد: وكان أبو عبيدة يرويه. قال: وسمعت محمد بن أبي بكر المقدمي يقول: سمعت جعفر بن سليمان الضبعي ينشد شعر السيد.

أخبرني (محمد بن الحسن) ابن دريد قال (حدثنا أبو حاتم) سئل أبو عبيدة من أشعر المولدين؟ قال: السيد وبشار. وقال الموصلی¹⁰⁷¹ حدثني عمي قال: جمعت للسيد في بني هاشم ألفين وثلاثمائة قصيدة، فخلت أن قد استوعبت شعره، حتى جلس إلي يوماً رجلٌ ذو أطمارٍ رثة، فسمعتني أنشد شيئاً من شعره، فأنشدني له ثلاث قصائد لم تكن عندي. فقلت في نفسي: لو كان هذا يعلم ما عندي كله ثم أنشدني بعده ما ليس عندي لكان عجباً، فكيف وهو لا يعلم وإنما أنشد ما حضره! وعرفت حينئذ أن شعره ليس مما يدرك ولا يمكن جمعه كله. أخبرني عمي قال حدثني الكراني عن ابن عائشة قال: وقف السيد على بشار وهو ينشد الشعر، فأقبل عليه وقال:

أيها المادح العباد ليعظي

إن لله ما بأيدي العباد¹⁰⁷²

فاسأل الله ما طلبت إليهم

وارج نفع المنزل العواد

لا تقل في الجواد ما ليس فيه

وتسمي البخيل باسم الجواد

قال بشار: من هذا؟ فعرفه، فقال: لولا أن هذا الرجل قد شغل عنا بمدح بني هاشم لشغلنا، ولو شاركنا في

¹⁰⁶⁹ ما قدمت عليه أحدا من طبقته

¹⁰⁷⁰ فأخرج

¹⁰⁷¹ النوفلي؟؟

This seems to be a scribal error, given that al-Nawfalī is not al-Iṣfahānī's direct transmitter.

¹⁰⁷² بيد الله ما أبدي

مذهبنا لأتعبنا. وروي في هذا الخبر أن عمران بن حطان الشاري خاطب الفرزدق بهذه المخاطبة وأجابه بهذا الجواب.

أخبرني علي بن سليمان الأخفش عن سعيد بن المسيب عن أبي سعيد السكري عن الطوسي قال: إذا رأيت في شعر السيد دع ذا فدعه، فإنه لا يأتي بعده إلا سب السلف أو بليّة م بلاياه.

وروى الحسن بن علي بن المعتمر¹⁰⁷³ الكوفي عن أبيه عن السيد قال: رأيت النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم في النوم وكأنه في حديقةٍ سبخةٍ فيها نخل طوالٌ وإلى جانبها أرض كأنها الكافور ليس فيها شيء، فقال: أتدري لمن هذا النخل؟ قلت: لا يا رسول الله، قال: لا مرء القيس بن حجر، فاقلعها واغرسها في هذه الأرض ففعلت. وأتيت ابن سيرين فقصصت رؤيائي عليه، فقال: أتقول الشعر؟ قلت: لا، قال: أما إنك ستقول شعراً مثل شعر امرئ القيس إلا (إلا) أنك تقوله في قوم بررة أظهار. قال: فما انصرفت إلا وأنا أقول الشعر. أنشد غانم الوراق من شعره لجماعة فمدحوه: قال الحسن وحدثني غانم الوراق قال: خرجت إلى بادية البصرة فصرت إلى عمرو بن تميم، فأثبتني بعضهم فقال: هذا الشيخ والله راوية. فجلسوا إلي وأنسوا بي، وأنشدتهم، وبدأت بشعر ذي الرمة فعرفوه، وبشعر جرير والفرزدق فعرفوهما، ثم أنشدتهم للسيد:

أتعرف رسماً بالسويين قد دثر
عفته أهاضيب السحائب والمطر
وجرت به الأذيال ريحان خلفه
صباً ودبوراً بالعشيات والبكر
منازل قد كانت تكون بجوها
هضيم الحشا ريا الشوى سحرها النظر
قطوف الخطا خمصانةً بختريّة
كأن محياها سنا دارة القمر
رمتني ببعد بعد قرب بها النوى
فبانّت ولما أقض من عبدة الوطر

ولما رأنتي خشية البين موجعاً
أكفمني أدمعاً فيضها درر
أشارت بأطرافٍ إلى ¹⁰⁷⁴ ودمعها
كنظم جمانٍ خانه السلك فانتثر
وقد كنت مما أحدث البين حاذراً
فلم يغن عني منه خوفاً والحذر

قال: فجعلوا يمرقون لإنشادي ويطربون، وقالوا: لمن هذا؟ فأعلمتهم، فقالوا: هو والله أحد المطبوعين، لا والله ما بقي في هذا الزمان مثله.
أخبرني الحسن بن علي قال حدثنا أحمد بن سعيد الدمشقي قال حدثنا الزبير بن بكار قال: سمعت عمي يقول:
لو أن قصيدة السيد التي يقول فيها:

إن يوم التطهير يومٌ عظيم
خص بالفضل فيه أهل الكساء

قرئت على منبر ما كان فيها بأسٌ، ولو أن شعره كله [كان] مثله لرويناه وما عيبناه. ¹⁰⁷⁵
وأخبرني أبو الحسن الأسدي قال حدثنا العباس بن ميمون [طائِع] قال حدثنا نافع عن التوزي بهذه الحكاية
بعينها [فإنه قالها في]:

إن يوم التطهير يوم عظيم

قال: ولم يكن التوزي متشيعاً ¹⁰⁷⁶.

قال علي بن المغيرة حدثني ¹⁰⁷⁷ الحسين بن ثابت قال: قدم علينا رجل بدوي وكان أروى الناس لجري، فكان
ينشدني الشيء من شعره، فأنشد في معناه للسيد حتى أكثر. فقال [لي]: ويحك! من هذا؟ هو والله أشعر من

¹⁰⁷⁴ لطاف؟؟

¹⁰⁷⁵ عَفَنَاه

¹⁰⁷⁶ متشيعاً؟؟ لعله خطأ الناسخ.

¹⁰⁷⁷ الحسن

صاحبنا.

أخبرني أبو الحسن الأسدي قال حدثني الحسن بن عليل العنزي عن ابن عائشة قال: لما استقام الأمر لبني العباس قام السيد إلى أبي العباس السفاح حين نزل عن المنبر فقال:

دونكموها يا بني هاشم

فجددوا من عهدا الدارسا

دونكموها لا علا كعب من

كان عليكم ملكها نافسا

دونكموها فالبسوا تاجها

لا تعدموا منكم له لابساً

لو خير المنبر فرسانه

ما اختار إلا منكم فارسا

قد ساسها قبلكم ساسة

لم يتركوا رطباً ولا يابسا¹⁰⁷⁸

ولست من أن تملكوها إلى

مهبط عيسى فيكم آيسا

فسر أبو العباس بذلك، وقال له: أحسنت يا إسماعيل! سلني حاجتك، قال: تولي سليمان بن حبيب الأهواز، ففعل.

وذكر¹⁰⁷⁹ وهو علي بن إسماعيل عن أبيه قال: كنت عند أبي عبد الله بن جعفر بن محمد (عليهما السلام) إذ استأذن(ه) أذنه للسيد، فأمره بإيصاله، وأقعد حرمه خلف ستر. ودخل فسلم وجلس. فاستنشد فأنشده قوله:

امرر على جدث الحسي

¹⁰⁷⁸ في المخطوطة: قد ساسها قبلكم ساسة لم يتركوا رطباً ولا يابسا لو خير المنبر فرسانه ما اختار إلا منكم فارسا

¹⁰⁷⁹ الميثمي

ن فقل لأعظمه الزكيه

أأعظماً¹⁰⁸⁰ لا زلت من

وظفاء ساكبة رويه

وإذا مررت بقبره

فأطل به وقف¹⁰⁸¹ المطيه

وابك المطهر للم

طهر والمطهرة النقيه

كبكاء معلولة أنت

يوماً لواحدھا المنيه

قال: فرأيت دموع جعفر بن محمد تتحدر على خديه، وارتفع الصراخ والبكاء من داره، حتى أمره بالإمساك

فأمسك. قال: فحدثت أبي بذلك لما انصرفت، فقال لي: ويلي على الكيساني الفاعل ابن الفاعل! يقول:

فإذا مررت بقبره

فأطل به وقف المطيه

فقلت: يا أبت، وماذا يصنع؟ قال: أو لا ينحر! أو لا يقتل نفسه! فتكلته أمه!.

حدث[ني] أبو جعفر الأعرج وهو – ابن بنت الفضيل بن بشار – عن إسماعيل بن الساحر راوية السيد وهو

الذي يقول فيه السيد في بعض قصائده:

وإسماعيل يبرز من فلانٍ

ويزعم أنه للنار صالي

قال: تلاحي رجالان من بني عبد الله بن دارم في لمفاضلة بعد رسول الله صلى الله عليه [وآله]، فرضيا بحكم

¹⁰⁸⁰ يا أعظماً

¹⁰⁸¹ حبس

أول من يطلع. فطلع السيد، فقاما إليه وهما لا يعرفانه، فقال له مفضل علي [بن أبي طالب رضي الله عنه] منهما: إني وهذا اختلفنا في خير الناس بعد رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، فقلت: علي بن أبي طالب. فقطع السيد كلامه ثم قال: وأي شيء قال هذا الآخر ابن الزانية! فضحك من حضر ووجم الرجل ولم يجر جواباً. وقال التميمي¹⁰⁸² وحدثني أبي قال قال لي فضيل الرسان : أنشد جعفر بن محمد قصيدة السيد:

لأم عمرو باللوى مربع

دارسة أعلامه بلقع

فسمعت النحيب من داره. فسألني لمن هي، فأخبرته أنها للسيد، وسألني عنه فعرفته وفاته، فقال: رحمه الله. قلت: إني رأيته يشرب النبيذ [في] الرستاق ، قال: قال: قال: أتعني الخمر؟ قلت نعم. قال: وما خطر ذنب عند الله أن يغفره لمحِب علي (بن أبي طالب)!

وأخبرني الحسن بن علي قال حدثنا محمد بن موسى قال: جاء رجلٌ إلى السيد فقال: بلغني أنك تقول بالرجعة ، فقال: صدق الذي أخبرك، وهذا ديني، قال: أفتعطيني ديناراً بمائة دينار إلى الرجعة؟ قال السيد: نعم وأكثر من ذلك إن وثقت لي (بمن تضمن) بأنك ترجع إنساناً. قال: وأي شيء أرجع! قال: أخشى أن ترجع كلباً أو خنزيراً فيذهب مالي، فأفحمه.

أخبرني الحسن بن علي قال حدثني عبد الله بن أبي سعد قال جعفر بن عفان الطائي الشاعر: (قال السيد)¹⁰⁸³ أهدى إلي سليمان بن علي مهراً أعجيني وعزمت تربيته. فلما مضت [علي] (به) أشهرٌ عزمت على الحج، ففكرت في صديق [لي] أودعه المهر ليقوم عليه، فأجمع رأيي على رجل من أهلي يقال له عمر بن حفص، فصرت إليه (أودعه المهر ليقوم عليه) فسألته أن يأمر سائسه بالقيام عليه وخبرته بمكانه من قلبي، ودعا بسائسه فتقدم إليه في ذلك، ووهبت للسائس دراهم وأوصيته به، ومضيت إلى الحج. ثم انصرفت وقلبي متعلق، فبدأت بمنزل عمر بن حفص قبل منزلي لأعرف حال¹⁰⁸⁴ المهر، فإذا هو قد ركب حتى دبر ظهره وعجف من قلة القيام عليه. فقلت له: يا أبا حفص، أهكذا أوصيتك من هذا المهر! فقال: وما ذنبي! لم ينجع فيه العلف. فانصرفت به وقلت:

¹⁰⁸² التميمي

¹⁰⁸³ This addition found in the manuscript clarifies the text.

¹⁰⁸⁴ خبر

من عاذري من أبي حفص وثقت به
وكان عندي له في نفسه خطر
فلم يكن عند ظني في أمانته
والظن يخلف والإنسان يختبر
أضاع مهري ولم يحسن ولايته
حتى تبين فيه الجهد والضرر
عائبته فيه في رفق فقلت له
يا صاح هل لك من عذر فتعذر
فقال داء به قدماً أضر به
وداؤه الجوع والإتعب والسفر
قد كان لي في اسمه عنه وكنيته
لو كنت معتبراً ناهٍ ومعتبر
فكيف ينصحني أو كيف يحفظني
يوماً إذا غبت عنه واسمه عمر
لو كان لي ولدٌ شتى لهم عددٌ
فيهم سميوه إن قلوا وإن كثروا
لم ينصحوا لي ولم يبقوا علي ولو
سأوى عديدهم الحصباء والشجر

قال وحدثني أبو سليمان الناجي قال: جلس المهدي يوماً يعطي قريشاً صلاتٍ لهم وهو ولي عهدٍ، فبدأ ببني
هاشم ثم بسائر قريش. فجاء السيد فرع¹⁰⁸⁵ إلى الربيع رقةً مختومة وقال: إن فيها نصيحة للأمير فأوصلها
إليه، فأوصلها، فإذا فيها:

¹⁰⁸⁵ فدفع

قل لابن عباسٍ سمي محمدٍ
لا تعطين بني عدي درهما
احرم بني تيم بن مرة إنهم
شر البرية آخراً ومقدماً
إن تعطيهم لا يشكروا لك نعمةً
ويكافئوك بأن تذم وتشتما
وإن ائتمنتهم أو استعملتهم
خانوك واتخذوا خراجك مغنماً
ولئن منعتهم لقد بدءوكم
بالمنع إذ ملكوا وكانوا أظلماً
منعوا تراث محمدٍ أعمامه
وابنية وابنته عذيلة مريماً
وتأمرُوا من غير أن يستخلفوا
وكفى بما فعلوا هنالك مأثماً
لم يشكروا لمحمد إنعامه
أفيشكرون لغيره إن أنعماً
والله من عليهم بمحمد
وهذا هم وكسا الجنوب وأطعما
ثم انبروا لوصيه ووليه
بالمنكرات فجر عوه العلقما

وهي قصيدةٌ طويلةٌ حذف باقيها لقبح ما فيه. قال: فرمى بها إلى أبي عبيد الله ثم قال: اقطع العطاء فقطعه،
وانصرف الناس، و(أ)دخل السيد إليه، فلما رآه ضحك وقال: قد قبلنا نصيحتك يا إسماعيل، ولم يعطهم شيئاً.

أخبرني به عمي عن محمد بن داود بن الجراح عن إسحاق النخعي عن أبي سليمان الرياحي [مثله
أخبرني الحسن بن محمد بن الجمهور القمي قال حدثني أبي قال حدثني أبو داود المسترق راوية السيد]: أنه
حضر يوماً وقد ناظره محمد بن علي بن النعمان المعروف بشيطان الطاق في الإمامة، فغلبه محمد في دفع ابن
الحنفية

عن الإمامة، فقال السيد:
ألا يأيها الجدل المعني
لنا ما نحن ويحك والعناء!
أتبصر ما تقول وأنت كهلٌ
تراك عليك من ورع رداء
ألا إن الأئمة من قريشٍ
ولاة الحق أربعة سواء
عليّ والثلاثة من بنيهِ
هم أسباطه والأوصياء
فأنى في وصيته إليهم
يكون الشك منا والمرء
بهم أوصاهم ودعا إليه
جميع الخلق لو سمع الدعاء
فسبّط سبط إيمانٍ وحلمٍ
وسبّط غيبته كربلاء
سقى جدناً تضمنه ملتٌ
هتوف الرعد مرتجزٌ رواء
تظل مظلةً منها عزالٍ
عليه وتغندي أخرى ملاء
وسبّط لا يزوق الموت حتى

يقود الخيل يقدمها اللواء

من البيت المحجب في سراة

شراة لف بينهم الإخاء¹⁰⁸⁶

عصائب ليس دون أغر أجلي

بمكة قائم لهم انتهاء

وهذه الأبيات بعينها تروى لكثير ذكر (ه) [ذلك] ابن أبي سعد فقال وأخبرني أحمد بن عبد العزيز قال حدثنا علي بن محمد النوفلي قال حدثني إبراهيم بن هاشم العبدي البصري قال: رأيت النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم في المنام وبين يديه السيد الشاعر وهو ينشد:

أجد بآل فاطمة البكور

فدمع العين منهمر غزير

حتى أنشدته إياها على آخره وهو يسمع. قال: فحدثت هذا الحديث رجلاً جمعتني وإياه طوس عند قبر علي بن موسى الرضا (عليه السلام)، فقال لي: والله لقد كنت على خلاف (ما يرى) فرأيت النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم في المنام وبين يديه رجل ينشد:

أجد بآل فاطمة البكور

إلى آخرها، فاستيقظت [من نومي] وقد رسخ في قلبي من حب علي بن أبي طالب [رضي الله عنه] (وتفضيله) ما كنت أعتقده.

أخبرني وكيع قال حدثني إسحاق بن محمد قال حدثنا أبو سليمان الناجي ومحمد بن حليم الأعرج قالا: كان السيد إذا استنشد شيئاً من شعره لم يبدأ بشيء إلا بقوله:

أجد بآل فاطمة البكور

فدمع العين متهمر غزير

¹⁰⁸⁶ تراه لا المطامع خرجتهم جعابيلها إليه ولا العطاء

مدح العتبي شعره وألفاظه في قصيدته اللامية: قال إسحاق: وسمعت العتبي يقول: ليس في عصرنا هذا أحسن مذهباً في شعره ولا أنقى ألفاظاً من السيد، ثم قال لبعض من حضر: أنشدنا قصيدته اللامية التي أنشدتناها اليوم، فأنشده [قوله]:

هل عند من أحببت تنويل

أم لا فإن اللوم تضليل

أم في الحشى منك جوى باطن

ليس تدأويه الأباطيل

علقت يا مغرور خداعة

بالوعد منها لك تخيل

ريا رداح النوم خمصانة

كأنها أدماء عطبول

يشفيك منها حين تخلو بها

ضمٌ إلى النحر وتقبيل

وذوق ريقٍ طيبٍ طعمه

كأنه بالمسك معلول

في نسوةٍ مثل المها خردٍ

تضيق عنهن الخلاخيل

يقول فيها:

أقسم بالله وآلائه

والمرء عما قال مسؤول

إن علي بن أبي طالب

فقال العتبي: أحسن والله ما شاء، هذا والله الشعر الذي يهجم على القلب بلا حجاب.
في البيتين الأولين من هذه القصيدة لمخارق رمل بالبنصر عن الهشامي، وذكر حبش أنه للغريض. وفيه لحن
لسليمان من كتب 1087 بزل غير مجنس.

أخبرني عمي قال حدثني محمد بن داود بن الجراح قال حدثني إسحاق بن محمد النخعي عن عبد الحميد بن
عقبة عن إسحاق بن ثابت العطار قال: كنا كثيراً ما نقول للسيد: ما لك لا تستعمل في شعرك من الغريب ما
تسأله عنه كما يفعل الشعراء؟ قال: لأن أقول شعراً قريباً من القلوب يلذه من سمعه خير من أن أقول شيئاً
متعدياً تضل فيه الأوهام.

أخبرني أحمد بن عمار قال أخبرنا يعقوب بن نعيم قال حدثني إبراهيم بن عبد الله الطلحي راوية الشعراء
بالكوفة قال حدثنا أبو مسعود عمرو بن عيسى الرباح ومحمد بن سلمة (ابن تيك؟؟ ومحمد بن أنس)، يزيد
بعضهم على بعض: إن السيد لما قدم الكوفة أتاه محمد بن سهل (حرك الأسدي) راوية الكميت، فأقبل عليه
السيد فقال: من الذي يقول:

يعيب علي أقوام سفاهاً
بأن أرجي أبا حسن علياً
وإرجائي أبا حسن صواباً
عن العمرين برّاً أو شقياً
فإن قدمت قوماً قال قومٌ
أسأت وكنت كذاباً ردياً
إذا أيقنت أن الله ربي
وأرسل أحمداً حقاً نبياً
وأن الرسل قد بعثوا بحق

وأن الله كان لهم وليا
فليس علي في الإرجاء بأسٌ
ولا لبسٌ ولست أخاف شيا؟

فقال محمد بن سهل: هذا يقوله محارب بن دثار الذهلي: فقال السيد: لا كان الله وليا للعاض بظر أمه! من
ينشدنا قصيدة أبي الأسود:

أحب محمداً حباً شديداً
وعباساً وحمزة والوصيا

فأنشده القصيدة بعض من كان حاضراً، فطفق يسب محارب بن دثار ويترحم على أبي الأسود. فبلغ الخبر
منصوراً النمري فقال: ما كان على أبي هاشم لو هجاه بقصيدة يعارض [بها] (فيها) أبياته، ثم قال:

يود محاربٌ لو قد رآها
وأبصرهم حواليتها جثيا
وأن لسانه من ناب أفعى
وما أرجا أبا حسن عليا
وأن عجوزه مصعت بكلبٍ
وكان دماء ساقيتها جريا
متى ترجى أبا حسن علياً
فقد أرجيت يا لكعُ نبيا

أخبرني محمد بن جعفر النحوي قال حدثنا أحمد بن القاسم البزي قال حدثني إسحاق بن محمد النخعي قال
حدثني إبراهيم بن الحسن الباهلي قال: دخلت على جعفر بن سليمان الضبيعي ومعي أحاديث لأسأله عنها وعنده

قومٌ لم أعرفهم، وكان كثيراً ما ينشد شعر¹⁰⁸⁸ السيد، فمن أنكره عليه لم يحدثه، فسمعتَه ينشدهم:

ما تعدل الدنيا جميعاً كلها

من حوض أحمد شربةً من ماء

ثم جاءه خبر فقام. فقلت للذين كانوا عنده: من يقول هذا الشعر؟ قالوا: السيد الحميري.

[حدثني عمي والكراني قالاً حدثنا عبد الله] (وروى) بن أبي سعد عن عبد الله بن الحسين عن أبي عمرو الشيباني عن الحارث بن صفوان، وأخبرني به الحسين بن يحيى عن حماد بن إسحاق عن أبيه: أن السيد كان بالأهواز، فمرت به امرأة من آل الزبير تزف إلى إسماعيل بن عبد الله بن العباس، وسمع الجلبة فسأل عنها فأخبر بها، فقال:

أتنتا تزف على بغلة

وفوق رحالتها قبه

زبيريةً من بنات الذي

أحل الحرام من الكعبه

تزف إلى ملك ماجد

فلا اجتماعاً وبها الوجبة

روى هذا الخبر إسماعيل بن الساهر فقال فيه: فدخلت في طريقها إلى خربةٍ للخلاء، فنهشتها أفعى فماتت، فكان السيد يقول: لحقتها دعوتي.

خرج الناس للاستسقاء فجعل يدعو عليهم: حدثني أحمد بن عبيد الله بن عمار قال حدثني يعقوب بن إسرائيل عن أبي طالب الجعفري وهو محمد بن عبد الله بن الحسين بن عبد الله بن إسماعيل بن جعفر قال أخبرني أبي

¹⁰⁸⁸ كثير الإنشاد لشعر

قال: خرج أهل البصرة يستسقون وخرج فيهم السيد وعليه ثياب خز وجبةً ومطرفٌ وعمامة، فجعل يجر مطرفه ويقول:

اهبط إلى الأرض فخذ جلمداً
ثم ارمهم يا مزن بالجلمد
لا تسقمهم من سبل قطرة
فإنهم حرب بني أحمد

أخبرني محمد بن العباس اليزيدي قال حدثنا محمد بن إسحاق البغوي قال حدثنا الحرمازي قال حدثني رجل قال: كنت أختلف إلى ابني قيس، وكانا يرويان عن الحسن، فلقيني السيد يوماً وأنا منصرف من عندهما، فقال: أرني ألواحك أكتب فيها شيئاً وإلا أخذتها فمحوت ما فيها. [فأعطيته] (فأخذ) ألواحي فكتب فيها:

لشربة من سويقٍ عند مسغبةٍ
وأكلة من ثريد لحمه واري
أشد مما روى حباً إلي بنو
قيس ومما روى صلت بن دينار
مما رواه فلان عن فلانهم
ذاك الذي كان يدعوهم إلى النار

أخبرني أحمد¹⁰⁸⁹ بن علي الخفاف قال حدثني أبو إسماعيل إبراهيم بن أحمد بن إسماعيل بن¹⁰⁹⁰ إبراهيم بن حسن بن طباطبا قال: سمعت زيد بن موسى بن جعفر يقول: رأيت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في النوم وقدامه رجل جالس عليه ثياب بيض، فنظرت إليه فلم أعرفه، إذ التفت إليه رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فقال: يا سيد، أنشدني قولك:

¹⁰⁸⁹ الحسن

¹⁰⁹⁰ بن إبراهيم

لأم عمرو في اللوى مربع

فأنشدته إياها كلها ما غادر منها بيتاً واحداً، فحفظتها عنه كلها في النوم. قال أبو إسماعيل: وكان يزيد بن موسى لحناً رديء الإنشاد، فكان إذا أنشد هذه القصيدة لم يتتعتع فيها ولم يلحن. وقال محمد بن داود بن الجراح في روايته عن إسحاق النخعي حدثني عبد الرحمن بن محمد الكوفي عن علي بن إسماعيل الهيثمي عن فضيل الرسان قال: دخلت على جعفر بن محمد أعزيه عن عمه زيد، ثم قلت له: ألا أنشدك شعر السيد؟ فقال: أنشد، فأنشدته قصيدة يقول فيها: ¹⁰⁹¹

فالناس يوم البعث راياتهم
خمسٌ فمنها هالكٌ أربع
قائدها العجل وفرعونهم
وسامري الأمة المفظع
ومارقٌ من دينه مخرج
أسود عبدٌ لكعٌ أو كع
ورايةٌ قائدها وجهه
كأنه الشمس إذا تطلع

فسمعت مجيباً من وراء الستور فقال: من قائل هذا الشعر؟ فقلت: السيد! فقال: رحمه الله. فقلت: جعلت فداك! إنني رأيته يشرب الخمر. فقال: رحمه الله! فما ذنبٌ على الله أن يغفره لآل علي ¹⁰⁹²! إن محب علي لا تزل له قدمٌ إلا تثبت ¹⁰⁹³ له أخرى.

M1]حدثني الأخفش عن أبي العيناء عن علي بن الحسن بن علي بن الحسين عن أبيه عن جعفر بن محمد أنه

¹⁰⁹¹ فقال أمهل وأمر ستورا فأسبلت وأبواب فتحت ثم قال أنشد

¹⁰⁹² لمحِب علي رضي الله عنه

¹⁰⁹³ تثبت الله

ذكر السيد فترحم عليه وقال: إن زلت له قدمٌ فقد تثبت الأخرى.¹⁰⁹⁴

نسخت من كتاب الشاهيني حدثني محمد بن سهل الحميري عن أبيه قال: انحدر السيد الحميري في سفينة إلى الأهواز، فمراه رجلٌ في تقضيل علي وباهله على ذلك. فلما كان الليل قام الرجل ليبول على حرف السفينة، فدفعه السيد فغرقه، فصاح الملاحون: غرق والله الرجل! فقال السيد: دعوه فإنه باهلي¹⁰⁹⁵. أخبرني علي بن سليمان الأخفش قال حدثني محمد بن يزيد المبرد قال حدثني التوزي قال: جلس السيد [يوماً] إلى قوم، فجعل ينشدهم وهم يلغطون، فقال:

قد ضيع الله ما جمعت من أدب
بين الحمير وبين الشاء والبقر
لا يسمعون إلى قول أجيء به
وكيف تستمع الأنعام للبشر
أقول ما سكتوا إنسٌ فإن نطقوا
قلت الضفادع بين الماء والشجر

أخبرني محمد بن جعفر النحوي قال حدثنا أحمد بن القاسم البزي قال حدثنا إسحاق بن محمد النخعي عن محمد بن الربيع عن سويد بن حمدان بن الحصين قال: كان السيد يختلف إلينا ويغشانا، فقام من عندنا ذات يوم، فخلفه رجل وقال: لكم شرفٌ وقدّر عند السلطان، فلا تجالسوا هذا فإنه مشهور بشرب الخمر وشم السلف. فبلغ ذلك السيد فكتب إليه:

وصفت لك الحوض يا بن الحصين
على صفة الحارث الأعور
فإن تسق منه غداً شربةً
تفز من نصيبك بالأوفر

¹⁰⁹⁴ It is likely that the omission of this report was made by the Sunnī-biased copyist.

¹⁰⁹⁵ قد باهل

فما لي ذنبٌ سوى أنني
ذكرت الذي فر عن خير
ذكرت امرأً فر عن مرحبٍ
فرار الحمار من القصور
فأنكر ذاك جليسٌ لكم
زنيماً أخو خلقٍ أعور
لحاني بحب إمام الهدى
وفاروق أمتنا الأكبر
سأحلق لحيته إنها
شهودٌ على الزور والمنكر

قال: فهجر والله مشايخنا جميعاً ذلك الرجل ولزموا محبة السيد ومجالسته.
أخبرني الحسن بن علي قال حدثنا محمد بن زكريا الغلابي قال حدثنا مهدي بن سابق أن السيد تقدم إلى سوار
[القاضي] ليشهد عنده، وقد كان دافع المشهود له بذلك وقال: أعفني من الشهادة عند سوار، وبذل له مالاً فلم
يعفه. فلما تقدم إلى سوار فشهد قال: ألسنت معروف بالسيد! قال: بلى، قال: استغفر الله من ذنب تجرأت به
على الشهادة عندي، قم لا أرضى [بك] (لك). فقام مغضباً من مجلسه وكتب إلى سوار رقعةً فيها يقول:

إن سوار بن عبد الله من شر القضاة

فلما قرأها سوار وثب [عن] (من) مجلسه وقصد أبا جعفر المنصور وهو يومئذ نازل بالجسر، فسبقه السيد إليه
فأنشده:

قل للإمام الذي ينجى بطاعته
يوم القيامة من بحبوبة النار
لا تستعينن جزاك الله صالحاً

يا خير من دب في حكم بسوار

لا تستعن بخبيث الرأي ذي صلف

جم العيوب عظيم الكبير جبار¹⁰⁹⁶

تضحى الخصوم لديه من تجبر

لا يرفعون إليه لحظ أبصار

تيهاً وكبراً ولولا ما رفعت له

من ضبعه كان عين الجائع العاري

ودخل سواراً، فلما رآه المنصور تبسم وقال: أما بلغك خبر إياس بن معاوية [حيث] (حين) قبل شهادة الفرزدق واستزاد في الشهود! فما أحوك للتعريض للسيد ولسانه! ثم أمر السيد بمصالحته.

وقال إسحاق بن محمد النخعي عبد الله بن محمد الجعفري قال حدثني محمد بن عبد الله الحميري قال: دخل

السيد (بن محمد النخعي؟) علي المهدي لما بايع لابنيه موسى وهارون، فأنشأ يقول:

ما بال مجرى دمعك الساجم

أمن قذى بات بها لازم

أم من هوى أنت له ساهر

صبابةً من قلبك الهائم

آليت لا أمدح ذا نائلٍ

من معشر غير بني هاشم

أولتهم عندي يد المصطفى

ذي الفضل والمن أبي القاسم

فإنها بيضاء محمودة

جزاؤها الشكر على العالم

¹⁰⁹⁶ Only found in the margin.

جزاؤها حفظ أبي جعفر
خليفة الرحمن والقائم
وطاعة المهدي ثم ابنه
موسى علي ذي الإربة الحازم
وللرشيد الرابع المرتضى
مفترض من حقه اللازم
ملكهم خمسون معدودة
برغم أنف الحاسد الراغم
ليس علينا ما بقوا غيرهم
في هذه الأمة من حاكم
حتى يردوها إلى هابط
عليه عيسى منهم ناجم

كان يأتي الأعمش فيكتب عنه فضائل علي بن أبي طالب: وقال علي بن المغيرة حدثني بن عبد الله السدوسي عن المدائني قال: كان السيد يأتي الأعمش فيكتب عنه فضائل علي رضي الله عنه ويخرج من عنده ويقول في تلك المعاني شعراً. فخرج ذات يوم من عند بعض أمراء الكوفة وقد حمله على فرس وخلع عليه، فوقف بالكناسة ثم قال: يا معشر الكوفيين، من جاءني منكم بفضيلة لعلي بن أبي طالب لم أقل فيها شعراً أعطيته فرسي هذا وما علي¹⁰⁹⁷. فجعلوا يحدثونه وينشدهم، حتى أتاه رجل [منهم] وقال: سمع عن علي قصة فنظمها: إن أمير المؤمنين علي بن أبي طالب رضي الله [تعالى] عنه عزم على الركوب، فلبس ثيابه وأراد لبس الخف فلبس أحد خفيه، ثم أهوى إلى الآخر ليأخذه فانقض عقاب من السماء فحلق به ثم ألقاه فسقط منه أسود وانساب فدخل جحراً، فلبس علي [رضي الله عنه] الخف. قال: ولم يكن قال في ذلك شيئاً، ففكر هنيهة ثم قال:

ألا يا قوم للعجب العجائب

¹⁰⁹⁷ له فرسي هذا وما علي

لخف أبي الحسين وللحباب
أتى خفاً له وانساب فيه
لينهش رجله منه بناب
فخر من السماء له عقاب
من العقبان أو شبه العقاب
فطار به فخلق ثم أهوى
به للأرض من دون السحاب
إلى جحرٍ له فانساب فيه
بعيد القعر لم يرتج بباب
كربه الوجه أسود ذو بصيص
حديد الناب أزرق ذو لعاب
ودوفع عن أبي حسن علي
نقيع سمائه بعد انسياب

[ثم] حرك فرسه ومضى وجعل تشبيهاً بعد ذلك:

صبوت إلى سليمى والرباب
وما لأخي المشيب وللتصابي

أخبرني أحمد بن محمد [بن محمد] بن سعيد قال حدثني عبد الله بن أحمد¹⁰⁹⁸ بن مستورد قال: وقف السيد يوماً بالكوفة، فقال: من أثناني بفضيلة علي بن أبي طالب (كرم الله وجهه) ما قلت فيها شعراً فله دينارٌ، وذكر باقي الحديث¹⁰⁹⁹. فأما العقاب الذي انقض على خف علي بن أبي طالب رضي الله عنه فحدثني بخبره أحمد [بن محمد] بن محمد بن سعيد الهمداني قال حدثني جعفر بن علي بن نجيع قال حدثنا أبو عبد الرحمن المسعودي

1098 محمد

¹⁰⁹⁹ This passage is found in the margin.

عن أبي داود الطهوي (عن نابت بن أبي صخرة) عن أبي الزعل المرادي قال: قام علي بن أبي طالب [رضي الله عنه] فتطهر للصلاة، ثم نزع خفه فانساب فيه أفعى، فما عاد ليلبسه انقضت عقاب فأخذته فحلقته به ثم ألقته فخرج الأفعى منه. وقد روي مثل هذا لرسول الله صلى الله عليه [وآله وسلم].

حدثني به أحمد [بن محمد] بن محمد بن سعيد (بن عقدة) قال حدثني محمد بن عبيد بن عقبة قال حدثنا محمد بن الصلت قال حدثنا حيان بن علي بن أبي سعيد بن عكرمة عن ابن عباس قال: كان النبي صلى الله عليه [وآله وسلم] إذا أراد حاجةً تباعد حتى لا يراه أحد، فنزع خفه فإذا عقاب قد تدلى فرفعه فسقط منه أسود سالخ. فكان النبي صلى الله عليه [وآله وسلم] يقول: "اللهم إني أعوذ بك [من شر ما يمشي على رجله ومن شر ما يمشي على بطنه و] من شر ما يمشي على رجله ومن شر ما يمشي على أربع ومن شر الجن والإنس".

قال أبو سعيد وحدثنا محمد بن إسماعيل الراشدي قال حدثنا عثمان بن سعيد قال حدثنا حيان بن علي عن سعد بن طريف عن عكرمة عن ابن عباس مثله.

أخبرني أحمد بن عبد العزيز الجوهري قال حدثنا عمر بن شبة قال حدثنا حاتم بن قبيصة قال: سمع السيد محدثاً يحدث أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم كان ساجداً، فركب الحسن والحسين على ظهره، فقال عمر رضي الله عنه: نعم المطي مطيكما! فقال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم: "ونعم الراكبان هما". فانصرف السيد من فوره فقال في ذلك:

أتى حسناً والحسين النبي

وقد جلسا حجرةً يلعبان

ففداهما ثم حياهما

وكانا لديه بذاك المكان

فراحا وتحتهما عاتقاه

فنعم المطية والراكبان¹¹⁰⁰

وليدان أمهما برّة

حصانٌ مطهرةٌ للحصان

وشيخهما ابن أبي طالب

¹¹⁰⁰ Found in the margin.

فنعم الوليدان والوالدان
خليلي لا ترجيا واعلما
بأن الهدى غير ما تزعمان
وأن عمى الشك بعد اليقين
وضعف البصيرة بعد العيان
ضلالٌ فلا تلججا فيهما
فبنست لعمركما الخصلتان
أيرجى عليّ إمام الهدى
وعثمان ما أعند المرجيان
ويرجى ابن حربٍ وأشياعه
وهوج الخوارج بالنهروان
يكون إمامهم في المعاد
خبيث الهوى مؤمن الشيصبان

[وذكر إسماعيل بن الساهر قال] أخبرنا أحمد بن عبد العزيز الجوهري قال [حدثني محمد بن أبيه قال] (حدثنا علي بن محمد النوفلي قال) حدثني أبي وعمي عن أحمد بن إبراهيم بن سليمان بن يعقوب [بن سعيد بن عمرو] (بن نوفل) قال حدثنا الحارث بن عبد المطلب قال: كنت جالسا في مجلس أبي جعفر المنصور وهو بالجر (الأكير حين عقده على دجلة البصرة) [وهو قاعدٌ مع جماعة على دجلة بالبصرة] وسوار بن عبد الله العنبري قاضي البصرة جالسٌ عنده والسيد بن محمد بين يديه ينشد قوله:

إن الأله الذي لا شيء يشبهه
أعطاكم الملك للدنيا وللدين
أعطاكم الله ملكاً لا زوال له
حتى يقاد إليكم صاحب الصين
وصاحب الهند مأخوذاً برمته

والمنصور يضحك سروراً بما ينشده، فحانت منه التفاتة فرأى وجه سوارٍ يتربد غيظاً ويسود حنقاً ويدلك إحدى يديه بالأخرى ويتحرق، فقال له المنصور: ما لك! أراك شيء؟ [قال] (قام): نعم، هذا الرجل يعطيك بلسانه ما ليس في قلبه، والله يا أمير المؤمنين ما صدقك ما في نفسه، وإن الذين يواليهـم لغيركم.¹¹⁰¹ فقال المنصور: مهلاً! هذا شاعرنا وولينا، وما عرفت [منه] إلا صدق محبة وإخلاص [نية] (في الطاعة). فقال له السيد: يا أمير [المؤمنين، والله] ما تحملت [غضكم] لأحد، و[ما] وجدت [أبوي] (لأبوي) عليه فافتتنت بهما، وما زلت مشهوراً بموالاةكم في أيام عدوكم. فقال له: صدقت. قال: ولكن هذا وأهلوه أعداء الله ورسوله قديماً والذين نادوا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم من وراء الحجرات ، [فنزلت فيهم آية من] (نزل فيهم) القرآن “أكثرهم لا يعقلون”. وجرى بينهما خطابٌ طويل. فقال السيد قصيدته التي أولها:

قف بنا يا صاح واربع

بالمغاني الموحشات

أنشدها أحمد بن عبيد الله بن عمار عن النوفلي، وأخبرنا محمد بخبره مع سوار بالقصة من ها هنا إلى آخرها، وقال فيها:

يا أمين الله يا من

صور يا خير الولاة

إن سوار بن عبد

الله من شر القضاة

نعتليّ جمليّ

لكم غير موات

جده سارق عنز

¹¹⁰¹ In the margin.

فجرةً من فجرات
[لرسول الله والقا
ذفه بالمنكرات
وابن من كان ينادي
من وراء الحجرات
يا هناة اخرج إلينا
إننا أهل هنات
مدحنا المدح ومن نر
م يصب بالزفرات
فاكفنيه لا كفاه ال
له شر الطارقات]

فشكاه سوار إلى أبي جعفر (المنصور)، فأمره بأن يصير إليه معتذراً، [ففعل] (فصار إليه) فلم يعذره، فقال:

أتيت دعي بني العنبر
أروم اعتذاراً فلم [أعذر] (يعذر)
فقلت لنفسي وعاتبته
على اللؤم في فعلها أقصري
أيعتذر الحر مما أتى
إلى رجل من بني العنبر
أبوك ابن سارق عنز النبي
وأملك بنت أبي جحدر
ونحن على رغمك الرافضو
ن لأهل الضلالة والمنكر

قال: وبلغ السيد أن سواراً قد أعد جماعةً يشهدون عليه [بسرقه] (بالسرق) ليقطعه، فشكاه إلى أبي جعفر، فدعا بسوارٍ وقال له: قد عزلتك عن الحكم للسيد أو عليه (أو النظر في شيء من أمره). [فما] (فلا تعرض له بسوء فلم يعرض سوار بشيء) حتى مات.

رماه أبو الخلال عند عقبة بن سلم بس الصحابة فقال شعراً: وروى عب الله بن أبي بكر العتكي أن أبا الخلال العتكي دخل على عقبة بن سلم والسيد عنده وقد أمر له بجائزة، وكان أبو الخلال شيخ العشيرة وكبيرها، فقال له: أيها الأمير، أتعطي هذه العطايا رجلاً ما يفتر عن سب أبي بكر وعمر (رضي الله عنهما) ولعن مبغضهما¹¹⁰²! فقال هل عقبة: ما علمت ذلك ولا أعطيته إلا على العشرة والمودة القديمة وما يوجبه حقه وجواره مع ما هو عليه من موالة قوم يلزمنا حقهم ورعايتهم. فقال له أبو الخلال: فمره إن كان صادقاً أن يمدح أبا بكر وعمر حتى نعرف براءته مما ينسب إليه من الرفض . فقال: قد سمعك، فإن شاء فعل. فقال السيد:

إذا أنا لم أحفظ وصاة محمدٍ
ولا عهده يوم الغدير المؤكدا
فإني كمن يشري الضلالة بالهدى
تنصر من بعد التقى وتهودا
وما لي وتيم أو عدي¹¹⁰³ وإنما
أولو نعمتي في الله من آل أحمدا
تتم صلاتي بالصلاة عليهم
وليست صلاتي بعد أن أتشهدا
بكاملية إن لم أصل عليهم
وأدع لهم رباً كريماً ممجدا
بذلت لهم ودي ونصحي ونصرتي

[مدى] الدهر ما سميت [يا صاح] (في الناس) سيدا

¹¹⁰² This may imply the copyist's Sunni prejudice.

¹¹⁰³ تيماء وعديا

وإن امرأً يلحى على صدق ودهم
1104 أحق وأولى فيهم أن يفندا
فإن شئت فاختر عاجل الغم صلةً
وإلا فأمسك كي تصان وتحمدا

ثم نهض مغضباً. فقام أبو الخلال إلى عقبة فقال: أعذني من شره أعاذك الله من السوء أيها الأمير، قال: قد فعلت على [ألا] (أنك) تعرض له بعدها.

After this report follows Paragraph B below, while Paragraph C (the deleted section) comes after it.

C

ومما يحكى عنه أنه اجتمع في طريقه بامرأة تميمية إياضية، فأعجبها وقالت: أريد أن أتزوج بك ونحن على ظهر الطريق. قال: يكون ككناح أم خارجة قبل حضور وليّ وشهود. فاستضحكت وقالت: ننظر في هذا، وعلى ذلك فمن أنت؟ فقال:

إن تسألني بقومي تسألني رجلاً
في ذروة العزم من أحياء ذي يمن
حولي بها ذوكلاع في منازلها
وذورعين وهمدلى وذويزن
والأزد أزد عمان الأكرمون إذا
عدت مآثرهم في سالف الزمن
بانك كريمتهم عني فدارهم

1104 حبهم

داري وفي الرحب من أوطانهم وطني

لي منزلان بلحج منزل وسط

منها ولي منزل للعز في عدن

ثم الولاء الذي أرجو النجاة به

من كبة النار للهادي أبي حسن

فقلت: قد عرفناك، ولا شيء أعجب من هذا: يمان وتميمية، ورافضي وإباضية، فكيف يجتمعان! فقال: بحسن رأيك، في تسخو نفسك، ولا يذكر أحدنا سلفاً ولا مذهباً. قالت: أفليس التزويج إذا علم انكشف معه المستور، وظهرت خفيات الأمور! قال: فأنا أعرض عليك أخرى. قالت: ما هي؟ قال: المتعة التي لا يعلم بها أحد. قالت: تلك أخت الزنا. قال: أعيدك بالله أن تكفري بالقرآن بعد الإيمان! قالت: فكيف؟ قال: قال الله تعالى: "فما استمتعتم به منهن فاتوهن أجورهن فريضةً ولا جناح عليكم فيما تراضيتن به من بعد الفريضة". فقالت: أستخير الله وأقلدك أن كنت صاحب قياس. ففعلت. فأنصرفت معه ربات معرساً بها. وبلغ أهلها من الخوارج أمرها، فتوعدوها بالقتل وقالوا: تزوجت بكافر! فحدث ذلك ولم يعلموا بالمتعة. فكانت هذه تختلف إليه على هذه السبيل من المتعة وتواصله حتى افترقا. عارضه ابن سليمان بن علي في مذهبه بباب عقبة بن سلم فأجابه: وقال الحسن بن علي بن المغيرة حدثني أبي قال: كنت مع السيد على باب عقبة ومعنا ابن سليمان بن علي ننتظره وقد أسرج له ليركب، إذ قال ابن سليمان بن علي يعرض بالسيد: أشعر الناس والله الذي يقول:

محمد خير من يمشي على قدم

وصاحباه وعثمان بن عفان

فوثب السيد وقال: أشعر والله منه الذي يقول:

سائل قريشاً إذا ما كنت ذا عمه

من كان أثبتها في الدين أوتاداً

من كان أعلمها علماً وأحلمها

حلماً وأصدقها قولاً وميعاداً

إن يصدقوك فإن يعدوا أبا حسن

إن أنت لم تلق للأبرار حسادا

ثم أقبل على الهاشمي فقال: يا فتى، نعم الخلف أنت لشرف سلفك! أراك تهتم شرفك، وتتلب سلفك، وتسعى بالعداوة على أهلك، وتفضل من ليس أصلك من أصله على من فضلك من فضله، وسأخبر أمير المؤمنين عنك بهذا حتى يضعك فوئب الفتى خجلاً ولم ينتظر عقبة بن سلم وكتب إليه صاحب خبره بما جرى عند الركوبة حتى خرجت الجائزة للسيد.

جلس مع قوم يخوضون في ذكر الزرع والنخل فقام وقال شعراً: أخبرني محمد بن جعفر النحوي قال حدثنا ابن القاسم البزري عن إسحاق بن محمد النخعي عن عقبة بن مالك الديلي عن الحسن بن علي بن أبي حرب بن أبي الأسود الدؤلي قال: كنا جلوساً عند أبي عمرو بن العلاء، فتذاكرنا السيد، فجاء فجلس، وخضنا في ذكر الزرع والنخل ساعةً فنهض. فقلنا: يا أبا هاشم، مم القيام؟ فقال:

إني لأكره أن أطيل بمجلس

لا ذكر فيه لفضل آل محمد

لا ذكر فيه لأحمد ووصيه

وبنيه ذلك مجلس نطف ردي

إن الذي ينسأهم في مجلس

حتى يفارقه لغير مسدد

سكراً بالأهواز فنحبه العسس وكتب شعراً لواليتها فأطلقه وأجازه: وروى أبو سليمان الناجي: أن السيد قدم الأهواز وأبو بجير بن سماك الأسدي يتولاها، وكان له صديقاً. وكان لأبي بجير مولى يقال له يزيد بن مذعور يحفظ شعر السيد ينشده أبا بجير، وكان أبو بجير يتشيع. فذهب السيد إلى قوم من إخوانه بالأهواز فنزل بهم وشرب عندهم، فلما أمسى انصرف، فأخذه العسس فحبس. فكتب من غده بهذه الأبيات وبعث بها إلى يزيد بن مذعور. فدخل على أبي بجير وقال: قد جنى عليك صاحب عسسك ما لا قوام لك به. قال: وما ذلك؟ قال: اسمع هذه الأبيات، كتبها السيد من الحبس، فأنشده يقول:

قف بالديار وحدها يا مربع
 واسأل وكيف يجيب من لا يسمع
 إن الديار خلت وليس بجوها
 إلا الضوايح والحمائم الوقع
 ولقد تكون بها أوانس كالدمى
 جملٌ وعزة والرباب وبوزع
 حورٌ نواعم لا ترى في مثلهما
 أمثالهن من الصيانة أربع
 فعرين بعد تألفٍ وتجمع
 والدهر صاح مشتتٌ ما تجمع
 فاسلم فإنك قد نزلت بمنزل
 عند الأمير تضر فيه وتنفع
 تؤتى هواك إذا نطقت بحاجة
 فيه وتشفع عنده فيشفع
 هب لي الذي أحببته في أحمد
 وبنيه إنك حاصدٌ ما تزرع
 يختص آل محمد بمحبة
 في الصدر قد طويت عليها الأضلع
 في هذا الغناء لسعيد.

B

[وحي] [قال باري بن صيفي؟؟ وحدثني إسماعيل] ابن الساحر: أن السيد دعي لشهادة عند سوار [القاضي، فقال لصاحب الدعوى: أعفني من الشهادة عند سوار،] [فاقتدى إقامتها بمال] فلم يعفه صاحبها منها وطالبه بإقامتها عند سوار. [فلما حضر عنده وشهد] قال له: [ألم أعرفك وتعرفني!] وكيف (كأطتك؟؟) مع معرفتك بي تقدم على الشهادة عندي! فقال له: [إني تخوفت إكراهه] [إني لأتُحِبُّ من النظر إليك وأكرهه)، ولقد افتديت

شهادتي عندك بـمال فلم يقبل مني فأقمتها ، فلا يقبل الله لك صرفاً ولا عدلاً إن قبلتها، وقام من عنده، ولم يقدر [سوار] له (سوار) على شيء لما تقدم به المنصور إليه في أمره، واغتاض غيظاً شديداً وانصرف من مجلسه فلم يقض يومئذ بين اثنين. ثم إن سواراً اعتل علته التي مات فيها فلم يقدر السيد على هجائه [في حياته] لنهي المنصور إياه عن ذلك. ومات سوار فأخرج عشيّاً وحفر له، فوقع الحفر في موضع كنيف. وكان بين الأزدي وبين تميم عداوة، فمات عقب موته عباد بن حبيب بن المهلب، فهجا السيد سواراً في قصيدة رثى بها عبداً ودفعها إلى نواتج الأزدي لما بينهم وبين تميم من العداوة ولقربهم من دار سوار ينحن بها، وأولها:

يا من غدا حاملاً جثمان سوار
من داره طاعناً منها إلى النار
لا قدس الله روحاً كان هيكلها
فقد مضت بعظيم الخزي والعار
حتى هوت قعر برهوتٍ معذبةٍ
وجسمه في كنيف بين أقدار
لقد رأيت من الرحمن معجبةً
فيه وأحكامه تجري بمقدار
فاذهب عليك من الرحمن بهلته
يا شر حي براه الخالق الباري

أخبرني أحمد بن عبد العزيز الجوهري قال حدثني علي بن محمد البقال قال حدثنا شيبان بن محمد الحراني وكان يلقب بعوضة [وصار من سادات الأزدي قال:] كان السيد جاري، وكان أدلم ، وكان ينادم فتياناً من فتيان الحي فيهم فتى مثله أدلم غليظ الأنف والشفنتين مزنج الخلقة. وكان السيد من أئتن الناس إبطين. وكانا يتمازحان، فيقول له السيد: أنت زنجي الأنف والشفنتين، ويقول الفتى للسيد: أنت زنجي اللون والإبطين. فقال السيد:

أعارك يوم بعناه رباًح

مشافره وأنفك ذا القبيحا
وكانت حصتي إبطي منه
ولوناً حالكاً أمسى فضوحا
فهل لك في مبادلتك إبطي
بأنفك تحمد البيع الربيجا
فإنك أقبح الفتيان أنفأ
وإبطي أنتن الآباط ريجا

أخبرني أحمد قال حدثني (علي بن محمد حدثني) شيبان (بهذا) قال: مات منا رجلٌ موسرٌ وخلف ابناً له فورث ماله وأتلفه (بالإسراف)، وأقبل على الفساد واللهو، وقد تزوج امرأةً تسمى ليلي، واجتمع على السيد وكان من أظرف الناس، وكان الفتى لا يصبر عنه، وأنفق عليه مالاً كثيراً،¹¹⁰⁵ وكانت [ليلى] تعذله على إسرافه وتقول له: كأي بك قد افتقرت فلم يغن عنك [شيئاً] (السيد ولا غيره). فهجاها السيد. وكان مما قال فيها:

أقول يا ليت ليلي في يدي حنقٍ
من العداوة من أعدى أعاديها
يعلو بها فوق رعنٍ ثم يحدرها
في هوة فتدهدى يومها فيها
أوليتها في عمار البحر قد عصفت
فيه الرياح فهاجت من أواذيتها
أوليتها قرنت يوماً إلى فرسي
قد شد منها إلى هاديه هاديتها
حتى يرى لحمها من حضره زيماً
وقد أتى القوم بعد الموت ناعيتها

¹¹⁰⁵ وشرب الخمر وكان فيمن ينادمه السيد وكان من أظرف الناس وكان الفتى لا يصبر عنه وكان للفتى حاضنة يقال لها ليلي وكانت

فمن بكأها فلا جفت مدامعه

لا أسخن الله إلا عين باكيتها

أخبرني الحسن بن علي قال حدثني محمد بن القاسم بن مهرويه قال حدثني إسحاق بن محمد النخعي وعبد الحميد [المجيد] بن عقبة قال حدثنا الحسن بن علي بن المغيرة الكسلان عن محمد بن كناسة قال: أهدى بعض ولاية الكوفة إلى السيد رداءً عندياً، فكتب إليه السيد فقال:

وقد أتانا رداءً من هديتكم

فلا عدمتك طول الدهر من وال

هو الجمال جزاك الله صالحاً

لو أنه كان موصولاً بسربال

فبعث إليه بخلعة تامة وفرس جواد وقال: يقطع عتاب أبي هاشم واستزادته إيانا.

حدثني عمي قال حدثنا الكراني عن بعض البصريين عن سليمان بن أرقم قال: كنت مع السيد، فمر بقاصٍّ على باب أبي سفيان بن العلاء وهو يقول: يوزن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يوم القيامة في كفة بأمتة أجمع فيرجع بهم، ثم يؤتى بفلان فيوزن بهم فيرجح ثم يؤتى بفلان فيوزن بهم فيرجح. فأقبل على أبي سفيان فقال: لعمرى إن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ليرجح على أمتة في الفضل، والحديث حقٌّ، وإنما رجح الآخران الناس في سيئاتهم، لأن من سن سنة سيئة فعمل بها بعده كان عليه وزرها ووزر من عمل بها (إلى يوم القيامة). قال: فما أجابه أحد. فمضى فلم يبق أحدٌ¹¹⁰⁶ من القوم إلا سيئه¹¹⁰⁷.

صادف بنت الفجاءة وأنشدها شعراً له متغزلاً فيها: وقال أبو جعفر الأعرج حدثني إسماعيل بن الساهر قال: خرجت من منزل نصر بن مسعود [أنا] وكاتب عقبة بن سلم (وأنا) والسيد ونحن سكارى. فلما كنا بزهران لقيتنا بنت الفجاءة بن عمرو بن قطري بن الفجاءة، وكانت امرأةً برزةً حسناءً فصيحَةً، فواقفها السيد وتخطب

¹¹⁰⁶ In the margin.

¹¹⁰⁷ شبه؟

عليها وأنشدها من شعره بتجشيش ، فأعجب كل واحد منهما صاحبه، (ثم خطبها فقالت كيف يكون هذا ونحن على ظهر الطريق؟)

This report is followed by Paragraph C

[ومما يحكى عنه أنه اجتمع في طريقه بامرأة تميمية إباحية، فأعجبها وقالت: أريد أن أتزوج بك ونحن على ظهر الطريق]. قال: يكون كنكاح أم خارجة (قل لها خطب قال نكح) [قبل حضور وليّ وشهود]. فاستضحكت وقالت: ننظر في هذا، وعلى ذلك فمن أنت ؟ فقال:

إن تسألني بقومي تسألني رجلاً
في ذروة العز من أحياء ذي يمن
حولي بها ذو كلاعٍ في منازلها
وذو رعينٍ وهمدانٌ وذويزن
والأزد أزد عمان الأكرمون إذا
عدت مآثرهم في سالف الزمن
بانت كريمتهم عني فدارهم
داري وفي الرحب من أوطانهم وطني
لي منزلان بلحجٍ منزلٌ وسطٌ
منها ولي منزلٌ للعز في عدن
ثم الولاء الذي أرجو النجاة به
من كبة النار للهادي أبي حسن

فقالت: قد عرفناك، ولا شيء أعجب من هذا: يمانٍ وتميميّة، ورافضيّ وإباحية، فكيف يجتمعان!. فقال: بحسن رأيك في تسخو نفسك، ولا يذكر أحدنا سلفاً ولا مذهباً. قالت: أفليس التزويج إذا علم انكشف معه المستور، وظهرت خفيات الأمور! قال: فأنا أعرض عليك أخرى. قالت: ما هي؟ قال: المتعة التي لا يعلم بها أحد. قالت:

تلك أخت الزنا. قال: أعيدك بالله أن تكفري بالقرآن بعد الإيمان! قالت: فكيف؟ قال: قال الله [تعالى] (عز وجل):
“فما استمتعتم به منهن فاتوهن أجورهن فريضةً ولا جناح عليكم فيما تراضيتن به من بعد الفريضة”. فقالت:
أستخير الله وأقلدك أن كنت صاحب قياس (وتفنيش). ففعلت . فانصرفت معه وبات معرساً بها. وبلغ (أمرها)
أهلها من الخوارج [أمرها]، فتوعدوها بالقتل وقالوا: تزوجت بكافر! فجحدت ذلك ولم يعلموا بالمتعة. فكانت
هذه تختلف إليه على هذه السبيل من المتعة وتواصله حتى افترقا.
عارضه ابن سليمان بن علي في مذهبه بباب عقبة بن سلم فأجابه: وقال الحسن بن علي بن المغيرة حدثني أبي
قال: كنت مع السيد على باب عقبة ومعنا ابنُ سليمان بن علي ننتظره وقد أسرج له ليركب، إذ قال ابن سليمان
بن علي يعرض بالسيد: أشعر الناس والله الذي يقول:

[محمد خير من يمشي على قدمٍ

وصاحبه عثمان بن عفان]

فوثب السيد وقال: أشعر والله منه الذي يقول:

سائل قريشاً [إذا] ما كنت ذا عمه

من كان أثبتها في الدين أوتادا

من كان أعلمها علماً وأحلمها

حلماً وأصدقها قولاً وميعادا

إن يصدقوك فلن يعدوا أبا حسنٍ

إن أنت لم تلق للأبرار حسادا

ثم أقبل على الهاشمي فقال: يا فتى، نعم الخلف أنت لشرف سلفك! أراك تهدم شرفك، وتثلب سلفك، وتسعى
بالعداوة على أهلك، وتفضل من ليس أصلك من أصله على من فضلك من فضله،¹¹⁰⁸ وسأخبر أمير المؤمنين

¹¹⁰⁸ تفضل من لا تشرف به على من شرفك منه وفضله يفضلك

عنك بذا حتى يضعك (موضعك الذي تستحقه). فوثب الفتى خجلاً ولم ينتظر عقبة بن سلم. وكتب إليه صاحب (الخبر) [خبره] بما جرى عند الركوبة¹¹⁰⁹ حتى خرجت الجائزة للسيد.

أخبرني محمد بن جعفر النحوي قال حدثنا (محمد) ابن القاسم البزي عن إسحاق بن محمد النخعي عن عقبة بن مالك الديلي عن الحسن بن [علي] (عون) بن أبي حرب بن أبي الأسود الدؤلي قال: كنا جلوساً عند أبي عمرو بن العلاء، [فتذاكرنا] (مرّ بنا) السيد، [فجاء] فجلس، وخضنا في ذكر الزرع والنخل ساعةً فنهض. فقلنا: يا أبا هاشم، مم القيام¹¹¹⁰؟ فقال:

إنني لأكره أن أطيل بمجلس
لا ذكر فيه لفضل آل محمد
لا ذكر فيه لأحمد ووصيه
وبنيه ذلك مجلسٌ نطفٌ ردي
إن الذي ينسأهم في مجلس
حتى يفارقه لغير مسدد

وروى أبو سليمان الناجي: أن السيد قدم الأهواز وأبو بجير بن (أبي سليمان) سماك الأسدي يتولاهما، وكان له صديقاً. وكان لأبي بجير مولى يقال له يزيد بن مذعور يحفظ شعر السيد ينشده أبا بجير، وكان أبو بجير يتشيع. فذهب السيد إلى قوم من إخوانه بالأهواز فنزل بهم وشرب عندهم، فلما أمسى انصرف، فأخذه العسس فحبس. فكتب من غده بهذه الأبيات وبعث بها¹¹¹¹ إلى يزيد بن مذعور. فدخل على أبي بجير وقال: قد جنى عليك صاحب عسسك ما لا قوام لك به. قال: وما ذلك؟ قال: [اسمع] هذه الأبيات، كتبها السيد من الحبس، فأنشده [يقول]:

قف بالديار وحيها يا مربع

¹¹⁰⁹ بذلك فيما خرج للركوب

¹¹¹⁰ أسرعت القيام؟

¹¹¹¹ بعثها

واسأل وكيف يجيب من لا يسمع
إن الديار خلت وليس بجوها
إلا الضوايح والحمام الوقع
ولقد تكون بها أوانس كالدمى
جملٌ وعزة والرباب وبوزع
حورٌ نواعم لا ترى في مثلها
أمثالهن من الصيانة أربع
فعرين بعد تألفٍ وتجمع
والدهر صاح مشئت ما تجمع
فاسلم فإنك قد نزلت بمنزل
عند الأمير تضر فيه وتنفع
تؤتى هواك إذا نطقت بحاجة
فيه وتشفع عنده فيشفع
هب لي الذي أحببته في أحمد
وبنيه إنك حاصدٌ ما تزرع
يختص آل محمد بمحبة
في الصدر قد طويت عليها الأضلع
في هذا الغناء لسعيد.

**This is the end of Paragraph C, which is connected to the end of Paragraph B in
the manuscript**

. فقال السيد :

من ناكثين وقاسطين الأروع

حول الأمين وقال هات ليسمعوا
قم يا بن مذعورٍ فأنشد نكسوا
خضع الرقاب بأعين لا ترفع
لولا حذار أبي بجير أظهروا
شنآنهم وتفرقوا وتصدعوا
لا تجزعوا فلقد صبرنا فاصبروا
سبعين عاماً والأنوف تجدع
إذ لا يزال يقوم كل عروبة
منكم بصاحبنا خطيب مصقع
مصحفر في غيه متتابع
في الشتم مثله بخيل يسجع
ليس مخلوقاً ويسخط خالقاً
إن الشقي بكل شرٍّ مولع

فلما سمعها أبو بجير دعا صاحب عسسه فشتمه وقال: جنيت علي ما لا يد لي به، اذهب صاغراً إلى الحبس
وقل: أيكن أبو هاشم، فإذا أجابك فأخرجه واحمله على دابتك وامش معه صاغراً حتى تأتيني به ففعل. فأبى
السيد ولم يجبه إلى الخروج إلا بعد أن يطلق له كل من أخذ معه. فرجع إلى أبي بجير فأخبره [فقال: الحمد لله
الذي لم يقل أخرجهم وأعط كل واحدٍ منهم مالاً، فما كنا نقدر على خلافه، افعل ما أحب برغم أنفك الآن].
فمضى [فخلى] سبيله و[سبيل كل من كان معه] ممن أخذ في تلك الليلة، وأتى به [وجاء] إلى أبي بجير.
فتناوله بلسانه وقال: قدمت علينا فلما تأتينا وأتيت [بعض] أصحابك الفساق وشربت ما حرم عليك حتى جرى ما
جرى، فاعتذر من ذلك [إليه]، فأمر له أبو بجير بجائزة سنوية وحمله وأقام عنده مدةً.
قال النوفلي وحدثني أبي: أن جماعة من أهل الثغور قدموا على أبي بجير بتسبيب [بهم] (لهم) فأطلقهم، ثم
جاءوه فعاتبوه على التشيع وسألوه الرجوع، فغضب من ذلك ودعا بمولاه يزيد بن مذعور فقال: أنشدني وبلك
لأبي هاشم. فأنشده [قوله]:

يا صاحبي لدمنتين عفاهما
مر الرياح عليهما فمحاها
حتى فرغ. ثم قال: هات النونية، فأنشده:
يا صاحبي تروحا وذرائي
ليس الخلي كمسعر الأحزان

[فلما فرغ] (ثم) قال: أنشدني الدماغة الرائية، فأنشده إياها. فلما فرغ أقبل عليه الثغريون فقالوا [له]: ما أعتبتنا
فيما عاتبناك عليه. فقال: يا حمير! هل في الجواب أكثر مما سمعتم! والله لولا أنني لا أعلم كيف يقع فعلي من
أمير المؤمنين لضربت أعناقكم! قوموا (في) [إلى] غير حفظ الله [فقاموا]. وبلغ (الخبر) السيد [الخبر] فقال:

إذا قال الأمير أبو بجير
أخو أسدٍ لمنشده يزيدا
طربت إلى الكرام فهات فيهم
مديحاً من مديحك أو نشيدا
رأيت لمن بحضرته وجوهاً
من الشكاك والمرجين سودا
كأن يزيد ينشد بامتداح
أبا حسنٍ نصارى أو يهودا

وروى أبو داود المسترق: أن السيد والعبدى اجتمعوا، فأنشد السيد:

إني أدين بما دان الوصي به
يوم الخريبة من قتل المحلينا
وبالذي دان يوم النهروان به
وشاركت كفه كفي بصفينا

فقال له العبدى: أخطأت، لو شاركت كفك كفه كنت مثله، ولكن قل: تابعت (كفه) كفي [كفه] لتكون تابعاً لا شريكاً. فكان السيد بعد ذلك يقول: أنا أشعر الناس إلا العبدى.

وقال إسحاق النخعي عن عبد الحميد بن عقبة عن أبي جعفر الأعرج عن إسماعيل بن الساحر قال: كنت مع السيد وقد اكرتينا سفينة إلى الأهواز، فجلس فيها معنا قومٌ شراةً، فجعلوا ينالون من عثمان (رضي الله عنه). فأخرج السيد رأسه إليهم وقال (أخزاه الله)¹¹¹²:

شفيت من نعتل في نحتت أثلته
فأعمد هديت إلى نحت الغويين
أعمد هديت إلى نحت اللذين هما
كانا عن الشر لو شاء غنيين

قال إسماعيل: فلما قدمنا الأهواز [قدم] (شرب) السيد وقد سكر، فأتي به [أبا] (أبو) بجير بن سماك الأسدي، وكان ابن النجاشي¹¹¹³ عند ابن سماك بعد العشاء الآخرة، وكان يعرفه باسمه ولم يعرفه. فقال له: يا شيخ السوء، تخرج سكران في هذا الوقت! لأحسنن أدبك. فقال له: والله لا فعلت، ولتكرمني ولتخلعن علي وتحملني [وتجيزني]. قال: أو تهزأ أيضاً! قال: لا والله! ثم اندفع ينشده فقال:

من كان معتذراً من شتمه عمراً
فابن النجاشي منه غير معتذر
وابن النجاشي براء غير محتشم
في دينه من أبي بكر ومن عمر
ثم أنشده قوله:
إحداهما نمت عليه حديثه

¹¹¹² This formula seems to imply the copyist's sectarian tendency.

¹¹¹³ نقال لابن النجاشي

وبغت عليه نفسه إحداهما
فهما اللتان سمعت رب محمد
في الذكر قص على العباد نباهما

فقال: أبو هاشم؟ فقال نعم. قال: ارتفع. فحمله وأجازه، وقال: والله لأصدقن قولك في جميع ما حلفت عليه.
أباح له أبو بجير شرب النبيذ: قال إسماعيل: رأى أبو بجير السيد متغير اللون، فسأله عن [حاله] [خبره]، فقال:
فقدت الشراب [الذي ألفته] لكرهه الأمير إياه، قال: اشربه، فإننا نحتمله لك. قال: ليس عندي. قال لكتابه: اكتب
له بمائتي دورق مبيختج. فقال له السيد: [ليس هذا من البلاغة] [هذا العي]. قال: [وما هي] [أي عي ترى؟]
قال: البلاغة أن تأتي من الكلام بما تحتاج إليه [وتدع] [دون] ما يستغنى عنه. قال: وكيف [ذلك] [أقول]؟ قال:
اكتب بمائتي دورق مي ولا تكتب بختج، فإنك [تستغني] [مستغن] عنه. فضحك، [ثم أمر] [قال: اكتبوا له بذلك]
فكتب له بذلك. قال: والمي: النبيذ (بالفارسية)

قال إسماعيل: وبلغ السيد وهو بالأهواز أن أبا بجير قد أشرف على الموت، فأظهرت المرجئة الشمامة [به].
فخرج السيد محترفاً حتى اكترى سفينةً وخرج إليها، وأنشأ يقول:

تباشر أهل تدمر إذ أتاهم
بأمر أميرنا لهم بشير
ولا لأمرنا ذنبٌ إليهم
صغيرٌ في الحياة ولا كبير
سوى حب النبي وأقربيه
ومولاهم بحبهم جدير
وقالوا لي لكىما يحزنوني
ولكن قولهم إفكٌ وزور
لقد أمسى أخوك أبو بجير
بمنزلة يزار ولا يزور
وظلت شيعة الهادي عليّ

كأن الأرض تحتهم تمور
فبت كأنني مما رموني
به في قد ذي حلقٍ أسير
كأن مدامعي وجفون عيني
توخز بالقتاد فهن عور
أقول علي للرحمن نذرٌ
صحيحٌ حيث تحتبس النذور
بمكة إن لقيت أبا بجيرٍ
صحيحاً واللواء له يسير
[وهي قصيدة طويلة.]

وروى محمد بن عاصم عن أبي داود المسترق عن السيد: أنه رأى النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم في النوم،
فاستنشدته فأنشدته قوله:

لأم عمرو باللوى مربع
طامسةٌ أعلامه بلقع
حتى انتهى إلى قوله:
قالوا له لو شئت أعلمتنا
إلى من الغاية والمفزع

فقال: حسبك! ثم نقض يده وقال: قد والله أعلمتهم.

وروى أبو داود وإسماعيل بن الساحر: أنهما حضرا السيد عند وفاته بواسط وقد أصابه شرٌّ وكربٌ فجلس ثم
قال: اللهم أهكذا جزائي في حب آل محمد! قال: فكأنها كانت ناراً فطفنت عنه.

M2] وأخبرني محمد بن العباس اليزيدي بإسنادٍ له لم يحضرني وأنا أخرجه إن شاء الله تعالى قال: حدثني من

حضر السيد وقد احتضر فقال:

برئت إلى الأله من ابن أروى

ومن دين الخوارج أجمعينا

ومن فعل برئت ومن فعيل

غداة دعي أمير المؤمنين

ثم كأن نفسه كانت حصاةً فسقطت.¹¹¹⁴

أخبرنا أحمد بن عبد العزيز الجوهري قال حدثنا عمر بن شبة عن أبي الهذيل العلاف [عن أبي جعفر المنصور]¹¹¹⁵ قال: بلغني أن السيد مات بواسط فلم يدفنوه. والله لئن [تحقق عندي] (كان هذا حقاً) لأحرقنها!. حدثني محمد بن يحيى اللؤلؤي قال حدثني محمد بن عباد بن صهيب عن أبيه قال: كنت عند جعفر بن محمد، فأتاه نعي السيد، فدعا له وترحم عليه. فقال رجلٌ: يا بن رسول الله، تدعو له وهو يشرب الخمر ويؤمن بالرجعة! فقال: حدثني أبي عن جدي أن محبي آل محمد (صلى الله عليه) لا يموتون إلا تائبين وقد تاب، ورفع مصلىً كانت تحته، فأخرج كتاباً من السيد يعرفه فيه أنه قد تاب ويسأله الدعاء له. وذكر محمد بن إدريس العتبي أن معاذ بن يزيد الحميري حدثه أن السيد عاش إلى خلافة هارون الرشيد وفي أيامه مات، وأنه مدحه بقصيدتين فأمر له ببدرتين ففرقهما. فبلغ ذلك الرشيد فقال: أحسب أبا هاشم تورع عن قبول جوائزنا.

أخبرني ابن عمار قال حدثنا يعقوب بن نعيم قال حدثنا إبراهيم بن عبد الله الطلحي قال حدثني إسحاق بن محمد بن بشير بن عمار الصيرفي عن جده بشير بن عمار قال: حضرت وفاة السيد في الرميعة ببغداد، فوجه رسولاً إلى صف الجزارين الكوفيين يعلمهم بحاله ووفاته، فغلط الرسول فذهب إلى صف السموسين، فشتموه ولعنوه، فعلم أنه قد غلط، فعاد إلى الكوفيين [يعلمهم بحاله ووفاته] (فأعلمهم أنه قد احتضر)، فوافاه (سبعون رجلاً معهم) سبعون كفناً. قال: وحضرناه جميعاً وإنه ليتحسر تحسراً شديداً وإن وجهه لأسود كالقار وما يتكلم، إلى أنا أفاق إفاقةً وفتح عينيه فنظر إلى ناحية القبلة ثم قال: يا أمير المؤمنين، أتفعل هذا بوليك! قالها ثلاث مرات

¹¹¹⁴ Like M1.

¹¹¹⁵ In the margin.

مرةً بعد أخرى. قال: فتجلى والله في جبهته عرق بياض، فما زال يتسع ويلبس وجهه حتى صار كله
كالبرد¹¹¹⁶ ، وتوفي (فغما) فأخذنا في جهازه ودفناه في الجنينة ببغداد، وذلك في خلافة الرشيد

¹¹¹⁶ كالبرد

Appendix Four: Al-Iṣfahānī's Sources

Based on the framework of inquiry in Chapter Three, a number of al-Iṣfahānī's sources are here evaluated in order to discover whether their works can be used to reconstruct a repertoire of information at al-Iṣfahānī's disposal. In the case of direct informants, such as al-Ṭabarī, the questions pursued include whether al-Iṣfahānī's transmission from al-Ṭabarī is fixed and to what extent the *Tārīkh* was accessed by al-Iṣfahānī. These questions are addressed via textual comparison and a survey of al-Iṣfahānī's quotations from al-Ṭabarī. On the other hand, for the indirect informants, whose reports al-Iṣfahānī accesses through one or more intermediary transmitters, aside from the availability of the narrations, it is important to consider the differences between the recensions, caused by their oral and aural transmission. The recensions are evaluated either by a textual comparison or by an examination of the *isnāds*. Although uncertainty remains, the following analyses argue that a small part of Ibn Sa'd's *Ṭabaqāt*, part of the *Tārīkh* by al-Ṭabarī, the narrations of 'Umar b. Shabba, and probably Ibn Qutayba's *al-Shi'r* can contribute to our examination of al-Iṣfahānī's selection of material.

Ibn Sa'd

Muḥammad b. Sa'd (168–230/784–845), known as the scribe of al-Wāqidī, is not frequently found in the *Aghānī*: he only appears fourteen times, based on the indices.¹¹¹⁷ He is linked with al-Iṣfahānī via different transmitters, such as al-

¹¹¹⁷ Ibn Sa'd is also cited in the *Maqātil*; see: Günther, *Quellenuntersuchungen*, 207.

Iṣfahānī's uncle, al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad, Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, Muḥammad b. Khalaf (either Ibn Marzubān or Wakī'), al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī al-Khaffāf, and al-Ṭabarī, as illustrated in tabular form below. The first column gives a number plus Is (short for Ibn Sa'd) to each report where Ibn Sa'd is involved in the *isnād*. The second marks its location in terms of volume/page in the *Aghānī*, while the third notes the informants in its *isnād* and the fourth summarises its *matn*.

Number	Location (vl./page)	Informants in <i>isnād</i>	Report
Is1	1/271	Ibn al-Marzubān + his uncle ← Ibn Abī Sa'd ← Sa'id b. Yahyā ← his uncle ← Ibn Sa'd	The poet, Nuṣayb
Is2	2/100	Al-Khaffāf ← Ibn Abī Usāma ← Ibn Sa'd ← al-Wāqidī	The palace, al-Khawarnaq, built by the Lakhmī king
Is3	4/22	Al-Ṣūlī ← al-Yazīdī ← Abū Suwayd b. Abī al-'Atāhiyya + Muḥammad b. Sa'd	Abū al-'Atāhiyya
Is4	4/94	Al-Khaffāf ← Ibn Abī Usāma ← Ibn Sa'd	The death year of Abū al-'Atāhiyya
Is5	4/166	Al-Khaffāf ← Ibn Abī Usāma ← Ibn Sa'd ← al-Wāqidī	The mourning competition between al-Khansā' and Hind bint 'Utba after the Battle of Badr
Is6	15/137	Al-Ṭabarī ← Ibn Sa'd	Ibn al-Zibā' rī in the <i>sīra</i> of the Prophet
Is7	16/61	Ibn Sa'd ← al-Wāqidī	Al-Mughīra b. Shu'ba
Is8	16/64	Ibn Sa'd ← Muḥammad b. Mu'āwiya	Al-Mughīra b. Shu'ba
Is9	16/75	Ibn Sa'd ← Muḥammad al-Asadī	Al-Mughīra b. Shu'ba
Is10	16/146	Al-Khaffāf ← Ibn Abī Usāma ← Ibn Sa'd ← al-Wāqidī	<i>Sīra</i> material
Is11	17/34	Some book of Ibn Sa'd	Sukayna bint al-Ḥusayn and Ibn Surayj
Is12	17/125	Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-'Azīz ← 'Umar b. al-Qāsim ← Ibn Sa'd ← al-Wāqidī	The verse of Ḥassān b. Thābit
Is13	17/233	Al-Khaffāf ← Ibn Abī Usāma ← Ibn Sa'd ← al-Wāqidī	The raid of Zayd b. Ḥāritha; <i>sīra</i> -material
Is14	18/245	Muḥammad b. Khalaf Wakī' + al-Khaffāf ← Ibn Abī Usāma ← Ibn Sa'd ← al-Wāqidī	The reason why the Ka'ba was burnt during the time of Ibn al-Zubayr

Table A.4.1. Ibn Sa'd's Narrations in the *Aghānī*

Based on this table, notwithstanding the small number of reports, it appears that the reports of Ibn Sa'd are not limited to the *sīra* and *ṣaḥāba* material — the major

themes in his *Ṭabaqāt* — but include some information about poets, as well as a singer (i.e., Reports Is1, Is3, Is4, Is11, and Is12). However, when it comes to *Ṭabaqāt*-like reports, the main chain of transmission is al-Khaffāf ← Ibn Abī Usāma (al-Ḥārith b. Muḥammad) ← Ibn Saʿd ← al-Wāqidī, as illustrated in Is2, Is5, Is10, Is13, and Is14. As our reconstruction of report repertoire involves the material from Ibn Saʿd's *Ṭabaqāt*, we will focus on this chain of transmission.

Although al-Khaffāf is an ubiquitous name in the *isnāds* in al-Iṣfahānī's works, virtually nothing is known about him.¹¹¹⁸ As for Ibn Abī Usāma (d. 282/896),¹¹¹⁹ his transmission from Ibn Saʿd is confirmed in the biographical literature, as well as in al-Ṭabarī's extensive quotations from him in his *Tārīkh*.¹¹²⁰ Nonetheless, the transmission of Ibn Saʿd's *Ṭabaqāt* seems to be less fixed, given the existence of different recensions.¹¹²¹ Furthermore, the textual comparison shows that the reports transmitted from al-Khaffāf are either absent or different from his original text.¹¹²² Besides, since we know so little about al-Khaffāf, it is not certain whether al-Khaffāf intervened in the narrations of Ibn Abī Usāma.

However, it is plausible that a part of the text, close to what we know as the *Ṭabaqāt* of Ibn Saʿd, was available to al-Iṣfahānī. Although al-Iṣfahānī had some *kitāb* of Ibn Saʿd, as he states in the *Aghānī* (see Is11), the report derived from this unnamed

¹¹¹⁸ Fleischhammer, *die Quellen*, 46–47. The only primary source mentioning al-Khaffāf only informs us of his teacher and student; see: al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, vl.8, 372.

¹¹¹⁹ Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 1352–1354; *idem*, *Mizān*, vl.2, 178–179; Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān*, vl.2, 527–528.

¹¹²⁰ Al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, vl.3, 267; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, “al-Ḥārith b. Muḥammad”, indices.

¹¹²¹ Different *riwāyas* are combined together in the manuscripts used for the printed edition: ‘Alī b. Muḥammad ‘Umar, *muqaddimat al-tahqīq* to *Ṭabaqāt*, by Ibn Saʿd, vl.1, 29–34, 40. For a discussion of the transmission of Ibn Saʿd's *Ṭabaqāt*, see: Osman Ghada, “Oral vs. Written Transmission: The case of Ṭabarī and Ibn Saʿd,” *Arabica* 48-1(2001): 66–80; Robinson, *Islamic*, 185.

¹¹²² Compare Is10 and Is13 with: Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, vl.5, 34–35, vl.3, 43. Is2, Is5, and Is14 are not to be found.

book of Ibn Sa‘d is not found in the *Ṭabaqāt*. However, the three reports about al-Mughīra b. Shu‘ba (Is7–9) are found in the *Ṭabaqāt*. For an unknown reason, al-Iṣfahānī does not mention any intermediary informant in these three reports, but the textual similarity may further support al-Iṣfahānī’s having had access to the *Ṭabaqāt* as we have it, or, at least, to the section on al-Mughīra b. Shu‘ba.¹¹²³

Ibn Qutayba

‘Abdallāh b. Muslim b. Qutayba al-Dīnawarī (213–276/828–889), the historian, man of letters, and philologist based in Baghdad, is the author of *al-Ma‘ārif*, *al-Shi‘r wa-l-shu‘arā*, *‘Uyūn al-akhbār*, and other works.¹¹²⁴ According to Fleischhammer, al-Iṣfahānī uses Ibrāhīm b. Ayyūb’s recension of Ibn Qutayba’s *al-Shi‘r wa-l-shu‘arā* without identifying the title of this work explicitly, but Ibrāhīm b. Ayyūb’s recension is considerably different from the printed edition and thus must be seen as a separate version.¹¹²⁵ Ibrāhīm b. Ayyūb (d. 313/925) is known to have transmitted Ibn Qutayba’s works without authoring any work of his own.¹¹²⁶ Nevertheless, Fleischhammer does not mention the fact that the majority of Ibrāhīm b. Ayyūb’s narrations of Ibn Qutayba’s reports are cited with other *isnāds*. That is, more often than not, al-Iṣfahānī combines two or more independent narrations to shape a single narrative. Therefore, the divergences between Ibrāhīm b. Ayyūb’s recension and the printed edition are not necessarily derived from Ibrāhīm b. Ayyūb’s intervention;

¹¹²³ Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, vl.5, 173–175.

¹¹²⁴ Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 85–86.

¹¹²⁵ Fleischhammer, *die Quellen*, 73: “[al-Iṣfahānī] hat ohne es ausdrücklich zu nennen, sein *K. Aṣ-Ši‘r wa-š-šu‘arā* in der Rezension seines Informanten Ibrāhīm b. Ayyūb benutzt. Da die betreffenden Stellen zumeist erheblich vom Text der Edition Michael Jan DE GOEJES (Leiden 1904) abweichen, muss von einer gesonderten Rezension gesprochen werden.”

¹¹²⁶ Al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, vl.7, 90–91.

rather, they are the result of the combination of different narrations or simply al-Iṣfahānī following the wording (*lafẓ*) of other transmitters, instead of that of Ibrāhīm.

In the table below, a thorough comparison between Ibrāhīm b. Ayyūb's recension, as used in the *Aghānī*, and the printed edition is presented. The first column gives the serial number of each report we examined with Iq (Ibn Qutayba). The second column notes its location (volume/page number), while the third specifies the intermediary informant and whether the report in question is transmitted with other transmitters (*et alii*). The fourth column notes the subject of the report, while the last measures the difference between the two texts. The considerable difference is determined by: first, whether there is some element missing in the prose part of the report; second, whether verse(s) involved in reports greatly differ (i.e., more than two verses are missing in either of them or the poem in question is completely different).

Number	Location (vl./page)	<i>Isnād/et al.</i>	Subject	Considerable Difference
Iq1	2/11	Ibrāhīm /Yes	Majnūn	Yes ¹¹²⁷
Iq2	2/63–65	Ibrāhīm/Yes	Majnūn	Yes ¹¹²⁸
Iq3	2/138–139	Ibrāhīm/Yes	Al-Ḥuṭay'a	Yes ¹¹²⁹
Iq4	3/59	Ibrāhīm/Yes	'Urwa b. al-Ward	No ¹¹³⁰
Iq5	4/103	Ibrāhīm/No	Umayyad b. Abī al-Ṣalt	Yes ¹¹³¹
Iq6	5/96	Ibrāhīm/Yes	Abū Zubayd	Yes ¹¹³²
Iq7	6/63	Ibrāhīm/No	Ḥammād al-Rāwiya	No ¹¹³³

¹¹²⁷ Ibn Qutayba, *al-Shi'r*, 564; the wording is more succinct than that in the *Aghānī*; additionally, the report in *al-Shi'r* is a long account, only the beginning part of which is quoted by al-Iṣfahānī with other sources.

¹¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 569–571; except for the different wording and the omission of some phrases, the story in the *Aghānī* has more verses.

¹¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 322–323; it appears that al-Iṣfahānī combines all the different accounts about al-Ḥuṭay'a's will together and, as a result, the text differs greatly from that of Ibn Qutayba; only the last part of Iq2 is found in *al-Shi'r*.

¹¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 675–676; the only difference is the sequence of the verses in this report.

¹¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 459–461; the point of the story is more or less the same — why Umayya's poetry is not used for the *shawāhid lughawiyya* — but the account in *al-Shi'r* gives more examples to illustrate it; it is hard to say whether the omission was made by Ibrāhīm b. Ayyūb or by al-Iṣfahānī.

¹¹³² *Ibid.*, 301–303; there is little in common.

¹¹³³ *Ibid.*, 779; the wording and phrasing are different, however.

Iq8	8/185	Ibrāhīm/Yes	‘Antara	No ¹¹³⁴
Iq9	9/19	Ibrāhīm/No	Kuthayyir	Yes ¹¹³⁵
Iq10	9/67	Ibrāhīm/Yes	Imru’ al-Qays	Yes ¹¹³⁶
Iq11	9/136	Ibrāhīm b. ‘Abdallāh/No	Al-Shammākh	Yes ¹¹³⁷
Iq12	9/141	Ibrāhīm/Yes	Al-Shammākh	Yes ¹¹³⁸
Iq13	9/152	Ibrāhīm/Yes	Qays b. al-Dharīh	Yes ¹¹³⁹
Iq14	9/258	Ibrāhīm/No	‘Adī b. al-Riqā’	No ¹¹⁴⁰
Iq15	9/281	Ibrāhīm/Yes	Nābigha of the Banū Dhubayn umpired in a poetry competition	Yes ¹¹⁴¹
Iq16	10/91	Al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad (al- Iṣfahānī’s uncle) /No	Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī	Not found in <i>al-Shi’r</i>
Iq17	10/199	Ibrāhīm/Yes	Abū Dulāma	No ¹¹⁴²
Iq18	11/13	Ibrāhīm/Yes	Nābigha of the Banū Dhubayn	Yes ¹¹⁴³
Iq19	11/40–41	Ibrāhīm/Yes	‘Amr b. Kulthūm	No ¹¹⁴⁴
Iq20	11/151	Ibrāhīm/Yes	‘Irār b. ‘Amr b. Sha’s	Yes ¹¹⁴⁵
Iq21	11/178	Ibrāhīm/No	Laylā al-Akhyaliyya	No ¹¹⁴⁶
Iq22	12/29	Ibrāhīm/Yes	Al-Ṭirimmāh	Yes ¹¹⁴⁷
Iq23	12/105	Ibrāhīm/No	Abū Zubayd	No ¹¹⁴⁸
Iq24	12/156	Ibrāhīm/Yes	Al-Jahhāf	Not found in <i>al-Shi’r</i>
Iq25	12/193–194	Ibrāhīm/Yes	Abū Wajza	Yes ¹¹⁴⁹
Iq26	13/7	Ibrāhīm/No	Abū al-Ṭamahān	No ¹¹⁵⁰
Iq27	13/86–87	Ibrāhīm/Yes	Al-‘Attābī	No ¹¹⁵¹
Iq28	14/182	Ibrāhīm/Yes	Thābit Quṭna	Yes ¹¹⁵²

¹¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 250–251; the wording, phrasing, and *urjūza* of ‘Antara are different.

¹¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 509–510; a completely different account.

¹¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 115; Iq10 *per se* does not appear in *al-Shi’r*, except for the reference which al-Iṣfahānī explicitly attributes to Ibn Qutayba: “according to Yemenis, Qubādh b. Fayrūz did not appoint al-Ḥārith b. ‘Amr; rather, he had Tubba’ the Last be the king”.

¹¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 317; Iq11 does not mention the verses in *al-Shi’r* to illustrate that al-Shammākh is *awṣaf al-nās li-l-qaws wa-l-ḥimāri wa-arjaz al-nās ‘alā al-badīha*.

¹¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 318–319; Iq12 only mentions one verse in which al-Shammākh praises ‘Arāba b. Aws, while there are two in *al-Shi’r*.

¹¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 628–629. Iq13 is much more detailed than that in *al-Shi’r* and has a different plot: Qays did not divorce Lubnā as Ibn Qutayba says.

¹¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 618; however, Iq14 does not mention the verse that illustrates ‘Adī’s capacity in the description of the mounts.

¹¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 344; the key difference is the number of poems quoted in this report, but the main outline of the story is the same, as is most of the phrasing and wording.

¹¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 776; Iq17 is clearly following the *laḥẓ* of al-Jāhiz.

¹¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 166–167; the order of paragraphs is slightly different.

¹¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 234–235; the verses quoted in Iq19 are different from those in *al-Shi’r*.

¹¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 425–426; the accounts are similar in the outline, but differ in details.

¹¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 449.

¹¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 581; the phrasing and wording are notably different.

¹¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 302.

¹¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 702; the *ḥadīth* in question is different, but Iq25 does not use the wording of Ibn Qutayba, presumably.

¹¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 388.

¹¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 863.

¹¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 630–631; the second half of Iq28 is not found in *al-Shi’r*.

Iq29	14/224	Ibrāhīm/Yes	Ḥammād ‘Ajrad	No, similar to Iq7 ¹¹⁵³
Iq30	15/126	Ibrāhīm/No	Hassān and Jabala	No ¹¹⁵⁴
Iq31	15/163	Ibrāhīm/No	‘Amr b. Ma‘dīkarib	No ¹¹⁵⁵
Iq32	15/225–226	Ibrāhīm/No	Mutammim b. Nuwayra	No ¹¹⁵⁶
Iq33	15/269	Ibrāhīm/Yes	Labīd	No ¹¹⁵⁷
Iq34	16/240–241	Ibrāhīm/Yes	Abū Ḥayya al-Numayrī	Yes ¹¹⁵⁸
Iq35	16/247	Ibrāhīm/No	A verse of al-Ma‘lūṭ	Yes ¹¹⁵⁹
Iq36	17/21	Hāshim al-Khuzā‘ī ← Ibrāhīm/No	Al-Kumayt	No ¹¹⁶⁰
Iq37	17/169	Ibrāhīm/Yes	Mālik b. Asmā’	No ¹¹⁶¹
Iq38	18/25	Ibrāhīm/No	Dhū al-Rumma	No ¹¹⁶²
Iq39	18/26	Ibrāhīm/Yes	Dhū al-Rumma	No ¹¹⁶³
Iq40	18/31	Ibrāhīm/No	Dhū al-Rumma	No ¹¹⁶⁴
Iq41	18/79	Al-Kawkabī/Yes	Abū Nuwās and Wālība b. al-Ḥubāb	Yes ¹¹⁶⁵
Iq42	19/12	Ibrāhīm/Yes	Ibn Abī Miḥjan	Yes ¹¹⁶⁶
Iq43	19/27	Ibrāhīm/No	Muslim b. al-Walīd	No ¹¹⁶⁷
Iq44	20/95	Ibrāhīm/No	Di‘bal b. ‘Alī	Not found in <i>al-Shi‘r</i>
Iq45	20/240	Ibrāhīm/Yes	Ayman b. Khuraym	Yes ¹¹⁶⁸
Iq46	20/268	Ibrāhīm/Yes	Ru‘ba	No ¹¹⁶⁹

Table A.4.2. Ibn Qutayba’s Narrations in the *Aghānī*

If we disregard the non-Ibrāhīm b. Ayyūb reports above, then, amongst 42 Ibrāhīm’s reports above, only 15 (Iq5, Iq7, Iq9, Iq14, Iq21, Iq23, Iq26, Iq30, Iq31, Iq32, Iq35, Iq38, Iq40, Iq43, and Iq44) are the pure narrations of Ibrāhīm’s recension, while 27 — almost two thirds of all the Ibrāhīm reports — are combined with other narrations. Amongst the reports preceded only by an Ibrāhīm-*isnād*, one is not found

¹¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 779; the wording and phrasing are different, however.

¹¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 306.

¹¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 372–373.

¹¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 337–338.

¹¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 276–277.

¹¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 774; only the stories about the gazelles are mentioned in Iq34.

¹¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 67; the gist is the same, but, according to Iq35, Jarīr stole (*sariqa*) al-Ma‘lūṭ’s verse, while this is not explicitly stated in *al-Shi‘r*.

¹¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 582.

¹¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 783.

¹¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 525.

¹¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 534.

¹¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 527–528.

¹¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 797; the gist of the story is the same, but the structure and phrasing are different, in addition to the number of the quoted verses.

¹¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 424; the second half and some verses in Iq42 are missing in *al-Shi‘r*.

¹¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 832; the phrasing is different.

¹¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 542–543; Iq45 is more detailed.

¹¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 595; the phrasing differs.

in *al-Shiʿr* (i.e., Iq44) and three differ from those in the printed edition (Iq5, Iq9, and Iq35). On the other hand, the reports that combine Ibrāhīm’s narrations with others tend to be divergent from the printed edition — 16 out of 27 have notable differences, while 10 reports are close to it, with the exception of Iq24, which is not found in *al-Shiʿr*. That is, Fleischhammer’s observation about Ibrāhīm b. Ayyūb’s recension overlooks the influence of the combined reports: the percentage spotted that are considerably different in Ibrāhīm b. Ayyūb’s narrations in the non-combined category is 21.4%, but 61.5% in the combined one.

The reason that those in the combined Ibrāhīm b. Ayyūb category tend to be different, as compared to the printed edition, is evident from al-Iṣfahānī’s editorial notes: he either integrates many accounts into a single narrative or cites the wording and phrasing of a non-Ibrāhīm b. Ayyūb report that essentially conveys the same idea as the quoted Ibrāhīm b. Ayyūb report, in his view. For Iq1, al-Iṣfahānī incorporates the accounts of ʿUmar b. Shabba (via al-Jawharī and al-Muhallabī’s narrations), Ibn Qutayba (via Ibrāhīm b. Ayyūb), Ibn Kalbī, Abū ʿAmr al-Shaybānī, al-Jaṣṣāṣ, and others, but he follows the wording (*lafẓ*) of al-Shaybānī and Abū ʿUbayda. When he combines a number of narrations from different sources, he also notes that some are more detailed than others, as stated in the *isnāds* of Iq2 and Iq3. In the former, after mentioning five different chains of transmission, covering almost five lines in the printed edition, al-Iṣfahānī comments that some narrations are more detailed than others. In the case of the latter, al-Iṣfahānī explicitly tells us that he is responsible for putting different narrations together: “Al-Ḥuṭay’a has a unique will, part of which is mentioned by a group (*farīq*) of transmitters. I have combined altogether what came to me [regarding this] in a single place and start with their *isnāds*.” Based on these

editorial comments, it is clear that al-Iṣfahānī quotes a number of reports altogether not only for their similarity in contents but also to weave a more comprehensive story.¹¹⁷⁰ In doing so, it is natural that he causes this kind of report to differ from the original text.

Therefore, instead of attributing all the textual divergences to Ibrāhīm's recension, it seems reasonable to take the combination and editorial intervention by al-Iṣfahānī into account. That is, Fleischhammer's judgment that Ibrāhīm's is a separate recension should be treated with caution, given that the non-combined reports in Ibrāhīm's recension tend to be similar to the text in the printed edition.

As the themes of Ibrāhīm and non-Ibrāhīm reports cover poets of different periods and, to some extent, correspond with the reports in *al-Shi'r*, despite textual divergences, it can be assumed, as Fleischhammer suggests, that al-Iṣfahānī does use *al-Shi'r*. Although whether Ibrāhīm's recension, as al-Iṣfahānī uses it, is a separate recension should be evaluated carefully, it is worth noting that al-Iṣfahānī also has written narrations from Ibn Qutayba, apart from Ibrāhīm's recension. In the *isnād* for Iq41, al-Iṣfahānī states that he "found some books by Ibn Qutayba" (*wajadtu fī ba'd al-kutub 'an Ibn Qutayba*). Yet Iq41 is rather different from *al-Shi'r*, in terms of the wording and phrasing.

To assess al-Iṣfahānī's access to Ibn Qutayba's *al-Shi'r* in its entirety, it can be established that he has the materials of *al-Shi'r*, mainly through Ibrāhīm's recension. Ibrāhīm's recension seems to have covered a significant part of this work, but it is

¹¹⁷⁰ See also Iq6, Iq8, Iq10, Iq13, Iq17, Iq19, Iq24, Iq25, Iq30, Iq37, and Iq39.

hard to determine how fixed the transmission of Ibn Qutayba's text was. In addition, al-Iṣfahānī uses the unnamed written work of Ibn Qutayba, too, but whether this implies a more fixed narration is not known, due to the lack of other examples.

Al-Ṭabarī

Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (224–5 – 310/839–923), the renowned Qur'ānic commentator, historian, and the founder of his own school of jurisprudence, is one of the direct sources quoted by al-Iṣfahānī in both the *Aghānī* and *Maqātil*. The quotations by al-Iṣfahānī in the *Aghānī* differ only insignificantly from al-Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*.¹¹⁷¹ Most of the materials derived from al-Ṭabarī are *maghāzī*, which comprise a large part of Ibn Ishāq's narrations. Al-Iṣfahānī acquired al-Ṭabarī's work by means of *qirā'a* (reading the text to obtain the teacher's permission to transmit it), with mentions of *Kitāb al-Maghāzī*, such as *ḥaddathanī bi-khabarihā Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī fī al-Maghāzī* and *qara'tu dhālika 'alā Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī fī Kitāb al-Maghāzī*.¹¹⁷² Based on textual comparison and how al-Iṣfahānī accesses these sources, the transmission is highly stable.¹¹⁷³ However, it is worth considering whether the whole *Tārīkh* was available to al-Iṣfahānī or just part of it. If the latter be the case, then which part?

Apart from the *maghāzī*, which consist of the reports of any kind transmitted by Ibn Ishāq and those related to the biography of the Prophet, al-Iṣfahānī has access to narrations of al-Zubayr b. Bakkār and Sayf b. 'Umar via al-Ṭabarī. The themes of the

¹¹⁷¹ Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 13.

¹¹⁷² Günther, *Quellenuntersuchungen*, 195–196; al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 9; *idem*, *al-Aghānī*, vl.4, 139.

¹¹⁷³ Also, see: Kilpatrick, *Making*, 153–155.

reports derived from al-Zubayr mostly relate to poetry and poets, such as Ḥassān b. Thabit — which is quite reasonable, considering al-Zubayr’s scholarly interests.¹¹⁷⁴ On the other hand, Sayf’s narrations about the *ridda* and the conquest are used by al-Iṣfahānī.¹¹⁷⁵ In addition to reports referring to the Umayyad caliphs, such as ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (r. 99–101/717–720) and Hishām b. ‘Abd al-Malik (r. 105–125/724–743),¹¹⁷⁶ al-Iṣfahānī also uses al-Ṭabarī’s accounts of the Khārijī revolt led by ‘Abdallāh b. Yaḥyā during the reign of Marwān b. Muḥammad (r. 127–132/744–750).¹¹⁷⁷ There is a report about the Shī‘ī poet, Di‘bal b. ‘Alī (d. 236/860), but its *isnād* seems problematic: al-Ḥasan ← Ibn Mahruwayh (d. c. 275/888) ← Muḥammad b. Jarīr. As al-Ṭabarī is always introduced as the direct informant, it seems unlikely that Muḥammad b. Jarīr, in this *isnād*, is al-Ṭabarī.

In a nutshell, it seems that a part of al-Ṭabarī’s *Tārīkh* was certainly available to al-Iṣfahānī and the transmission thereof is rather stable. However, except for this part, which ranges from the pre-Islamic period with regard to the life of the Prophet and the Quraysh up to the end of the Umayyad caliphate, it cannot be decided for sure whether the rest of the *Tārīkh* was available.

‘Umar b. Shabba

Abū Zayd ‘Umar b. Shabba (d. 262/878) was a Baṣrī client of the Banū Numayr, a poet, a transmitter of poetry and reports, and a jurist (*faqīh*). Having lectured in

¹¹⁷⁴ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.4, 120; vl.5, 22; vl.9, 120, 125.

¹¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, vl.15, 186–188, 219, 222; vl.16, 227; vl.19, 7, 10.

¹¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, vl.9, 227; vl.18, 246.

¹¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, vl.23, 185, 193.

Baghdad, where he was reputed to be a reliable scholar, he was brought to Sāmarrā' due to the *miḥna* between 234/848–9 and 237/851–2. His refusal to submit to the official doctrine led to the destruction of some of his books as a punishment. He died in Sāmarrā'.¹¹⁷⁸ 'Umar was the author of numerous works, which, though extensively quoted, do not survive except for one — *Kitāb Akhbār al-Madīna al-Nabawiyya*.¹¹⁷⁹

'Umar b. Shabba is mentioned in about 800 *isnāds* in the *Aghānī* and can be seen as one of its most important informants.¹¹⁸⁰ In terms of types of reports, amongst all his works, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, *Kitāb al-Nasab*, *Ṭabaqāt al-shu'arā'*, and *Kitāb al-shi'r wa-l-shu'arā'* seem to be the main sources used in the *Aghānī*,¹¹⁸¹ but other works, with titles such as *Kitāb umarā' Kūfa*, may also have contributed to articles like that on al-Walīd b. 'Uqba.¹¹⁸²

It is likely that 'Umar b. Shabba disseminated his works via oral transmission through lectures, rather than in the form of book.¹¹⁸³ This matches a reference to the transmission of the narrations of 'Umar b. Shabba made in the article on al-Qattāl: "I [al-Iṣfahānī] copied his report from a book of Muḥammad b. Dāwūd al-Jarrāḥ, who mentioned that 'Abdallāh b. Sulaymān al-Sijistānī gave it to him and informed him that he had heard it from 'Umar b. Shabba and was permitted to transmit it."¹¹⁸⁴ In other words, al-Iṣfahānī might not have known any work of 'Umar in its original form and structure; rather, he had the recensions of 'Umar's transmitters, especially

¹¹⁷⁸ Al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, vl.13, 45–48; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, vl.16, 60–62.

¹¹⁷⁹ Stefan Leder, "'Umar b. Shabba" in *EP*.

¹¹⁸⁰ Fleischhammer, *die Quellen*, 105.

¹¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 104.

¹¹⁸² Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 125.

¹¹⁸³ Stefan Leder, "'Umar b. Shabba" in *EP*.

¹¹⁸⁴ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.24, 96.

Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Jawharī, Ḥabīb b. Naṣr al-Muhallabī, and Ismā‘īl b. Yūnus al-Shī‘ī, who form the bridge between ‘Umar and al-Iṣfahānī in the majority of reports.¹¹⁸⁵ Hence, it is worth investigating the role of these three: are they transmitters or compilers?

Virtually nothing is mentioned about Ismā‘īl b. Yūnus al-Shī‘ī (d. 323/934) and al-Ḥabīb b. Naṣr Muhallabī. The former transmitted from ‘Umar b. Shabba and lived in Dukkān al-Abnā’, the northern quarter beyond the Syrian Gate of Baghdad.¹¹⁸⁶ The latter appears to have lectured in Baghdad around 307/919–20 and al-Iṣfahānī is known to have studied with him, but, aside from the names of his teachers and students, no further biographical information is given.¹¹⁸⁷ They do not seem to have compiled any work, but the biographical information is too scarce overall to support this judgment.

Likewise, little is known about al-Jawharī, but it is plausible that he acquired the narration of ‘Umar b. Shabba directly, as the *isnāds* suggest, because he was known to be the companion (*ṣāḥib*) of ‘Umar b. Shabba and died in 323/935 — personal contact between them is chronologically possible.¹¹⁸⁸ His work, *Kitāb al-Saqīfa* (or *Kitāb al-Saqīfa wa-Fadak*), survives in form of quotations in a number of works.¹¹⁸⁹ Apart from *akhbār*, al-Jawharī may have excelled in the science of the *lughā*, which he learnt from ‘Umar b. Shabba and other scholars, to the extent that he is described

¹¹⁸⁵ Fleischhammer, *die Quellen*, 32–33, 44, 54, 104–105.

¹¹⁸⁶ Al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, vl.7, 296; Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Lisān*, vl.2, 187; Le Strange, *Baghdad*, map No.II.

¹¹⁸⁷ Al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, vl.9, 164–165; al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-islām*, vl.7, 116.

¹¹⁸⁸ Al-Ṣūlī, *Akhbār al-Rāḍī*, 64.

¹¹⁸⁹ Sezgin, *Geschichte*, vl.1, 322; al-Ṭūsī, *al-Fihrist*, 56; Āqā Buzurq al-Ṭīhrānī, *al-Dharī‘a ilā taṣānīf al-shī‘a*, 2nd ed. (Beirut: Dār al-‘Adwā’, 1983), vl.12, 206.

as “*dābiṭ ṣaḥīḥ al-‘ilm.*”¹¹⁹⁰ He was also known as a Sunnī *ḥadīth* scholar, whose reliability was applauded by *muḥaddithūn* and thus his “works” (*muṣannaḳāt*) were transmitted by them, according to Ibn Abī Ḥadīd (d. 586 – 655–6/1190 – 1257–8).¹¹⁹¹ What are the “works” narrated by the *muḥaddithūn*? There is no answer to this. All the biographical references, that is, Ibn Abī Ḥadīd and al-Ṭūsī, mention only *Kitāb al-Saqīfa*.

Despite his authorship of *Kitāb al-Saqīfa*, al-Jawharī might not have altered the narrations of ‘Umar much, given that a few reports in the article about al-Walīd b. ‘Uqba are similar to those in *Akhbār al-Madīna*. However, one of these reports in the *Aghānī* omits a verse, which is mentioned in *Akhbār al-Madīna*.¹¹⁹² The omission may have been on the part of al-Iṣfahānī, but it is equally possible that it was taken out by al-Jawharī or left out during the course of transmission. Due to the nature of knowledge transmission, as well as the paucity of information about al-Jawharī, it is hard to determine to what degree al-Jawharī had reshaped ‘Umar’s corpus.

That said, it is worth taking into account the number of ‘Umar b. Shabba’s transmitters in the *Aghānī* — fifteen, in addition to the above three — and the fact that their narrations are often quoted together.¹¹⁹³ In the first five volumes of the *Aghānī*, al-Jawharī, as the transmitter of ‘Umar b. Shabba, is quoted 126 times and, on 39 of these occasions, with one or more transmitter of ‘Umar, such as Ismā‘īl b.

¹¹⁹⁰ Al-‘Askarī, *Sharḥ mā yaqa‘u fīhi al-taṣḥīf wa-l-taḥrīf*, ed. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Aḥmad (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa-Awlāduhu, 1963), 457.

¹¹⁹¹ Ibn Abī Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ*, vl.8, 319.

¹¹⁹² Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.5, 93, 95–96; Abū Zayd ‘Umar b. Shabba, *Kitāb akhbār al-Madīna al-Nabawiyya*, ed. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Aḥmad al-Mushayqīḥ (Medina: Dār al-‘Ulayyān, ND), vl.3, 188–190.

¹¹⁹³ Fleischhammer, *die Quellen*, 104–106.

Yūnus al-Shī‘ī, Ḥabīb b. Naṣr al-Muhallabī, or Ibn ‘Ammār.¹¹⁹⁴ In other words, about 30% of al-Jawharī’s recension matches others across a fifth of the whole *Aghānī*. This more or less implies the stability of the transmission of ‘Umar’s corpus.

Thus, although we have little information about the main transmitters of ‘Umar b. Shabba and his works might have been circulated aurally and orally, al-Iṣfahānī has a remarkable number of sources for his narrations — this renders reshaping by any intermediary transmitters a less determinant factor in al-Iṣfahānī’s selection. In other words, based on the biographical information, it cannot be ascertained whether the aforementioned intermediary informants, such as al-Shī‘ī, al-Jawharī, and al-Muhallabī, were but mere transmitters of ‘Umar’s narrations. However, the number of the intermediaries and the ubiquity of parallel quotations leave more room for al-Iṣfahānī to make his selection from amongst ‘Umar’s corpus.

To recapitulate the above analyses, there are works that are likely to have been available to al-Iṣfahānī, via oral or aural transmission or in writing, in the form in which we know them today or similar to it to some extent. Thus, these works, which can be used to reconstruct al-Iṣfahānī’s repertoire of information, include al-Zubayr’s *Jamharat nasab Quraysh* and narrations, certain parts of al-Ṭabarī’s *Tārīkh*, at least, and a section of Ibn Sa‘d’s *Ṭabaqāt*. Likewise, the corpus of ‘Umar b. Shabba could have been accessible in a relatively stable state for al-Iṣfahānī, based on the quantity and genre of the reports as well as the high frequency of parallel quotation — the use of more than one intermediary transmitter of ‘Umar b. Shabba. As for Ibn Qutayba, his *al-Shi‘r*, in the Ibrāhīm-recension, is used by al-Iṣfahānī. The Ibrāhīm-recension

¹¹⁹⁴ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, indices.

does not necessarily differ from the original text, but its stability is not beyond question. Thus, *al-Shi'r* should be used with caution as a text for comparison. Although answers to the questions concerning what al-Iṣfahānī truly excluded and why must remain probabilistic, by looking closely at the *isnāds*, at the relevant biographical information on the sources and informants, and at the textual comparison, more certainty can be attained when determining the extent of al-Iṣfahānī's use of a work and the stability of that work's transmission.

Appendix Five: The Article about Shurayḥ b. al-Ḥārith: the Use of a Rare Source

The article about Shurayḥ (d. c. 78/697) is divided into two parts: the first part addresses Shurayḥ, the second his marriage to Zaynab bint Ḥudayr, a Tamīmī woman. The second part is related to the introductory song, whose lyrics are derived from Shurayḥ's poem for this Tamīmī wife. The analysis below focuses on the first part. The first part begins with the genealogy, with the emphasis on the difference between Shurayḥ b. al-Ḥārith and Shurayḥ b. Hānī': the former is the judge and the subject of the article. Al-Iṣfahānī then gives his death dates and age. The main sources for al-Iṣfahānī comprise Ibn Sa'd and Muḥammad b. Khalaf Wakī', the author of *Akḥbār al-quḍā*.¹¹⁹⁵ Then, al-Iṣfahānī moves to the beginning of his adjudication career. According to Wakī', he impressed 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb after playing the arbitrator between the caliph and a man. This report and the next include the exhortation of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb concerning the adjudication. Then al-Iṣfahānī adds his remark: "There are a lot of reports about many of his adjudications; to mention them all is redundant. These include [reports] whose narration is indispensable. Amongst them is the lawsuit of the armour of the Commander of the Faithful, 'Alī."¹¹⁹⁶ In this remark, he rightly points out the abundance of reports about Shurayḥ's *qāḍī* career. Both Ibn Sa'd and Wakī' have much to say — the latter allocates more than 100 printed pages to him.¹¹⁹⁷ It is impractical to narrate all, but one of the examples deserves special attention, according to al-Iṣfahānī: the lawsuit

¹¹⁹⁵ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.17, 155–157.

¹¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, vl.17, 157.

¹¹⁹⁷ Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqāt*, vl.8, 254–265; Muḥammad b. Khalaf Wakī', *Akḥbār al-Quḍā*, ed. Sa'īd M. al-Laḥḥām (Cairo: 'Ālam al-Kutub, ND), 356–473.

of the armour of ‘Alī.

‘Alī and a Jew went to Shurayḥ for their dispute over the rightful ownership of a piece of armour. When Shurayḥ saw them, he stood up from his seat, but ‘Alī told him to sit and explained: ‘If my adversary were a Muslim, I would sit with him in front of you, but I heard that the Prophet said: “Do not sit with them, do not visit the sick ones of them, do not attend their funerals and force them to the narrowest roads. If they curse you, beat them; if they beat you, kill them.”’ Then, ‘Alī explained his case. Shurayḥ asked ‘Alī to bring his witness to testify that the armour belonged to him. ‘Alī called Qanbar and al-Ḥasan, but Shurayḥ refused to accept the testimony of the son for his father. ‘Alī replied: ‘I heard from ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, who heard from the Prophet, saying: “Truly, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn are the *sayyids* of the youth of Heaven.” Shurayḥ concurs with ‘Alī. Then, ‘Alī asked him: “Don’t you permit the testimony of one of the *sayyids* of the youth of Heaven? By God, you shall go out to Bāniqiyā [in Kūfa] and adjudicate for its people for forty days!” In the end, ‘Alī lost the case. Impressed by the justice of Islamic Law and ‘Alī’s submission to the result, the Jew admitted that he took the armour when it fell from ‘Alī’s mount and converted to Islam. ‘Alī gave the armour to him and rewarded him. The converted Jew adhered to ‘Alī till he was killed at the Battle of Ṣiffīn.¹¹⁹⁸

The content of this report illustrates well the superiority of ‘Alī in judicial matters and how he embodies the *sunna* of the Prophet. Moreover, it accentuates the special standing of his sons, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, as the *sayyids* of the youth of Heaven, and his respect for the judge, despite his caliphal status and the unfavourable result.

¹¹⁹⁸ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.17, 157–158.

The personal charisma of ‘Alī then prompted the Jew to conversion and won his partisanship. This report does not present ‘Alī and his sons in a hyperbolically favourable way, as the *ḥadīth* of the youth of the Heaven is not absent from the Sunnī *ḥadīth* collection.¹¹⁹⁹ Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that al-Iṣfahānī chose this report to exemplify Shurayḥ’s adjudication rather than other accounts that may have been available to him, through the works or narrations of Ibn Sa’d and Wakī‘. There is a report in which ‘Alī praises Shurayḥ as the best judge (*aqḍā al-nās*), as well as the anecdotes about his poetry.¹²⁰⁰ Instead of citing one of these reports that illustrate the subject’s merits in terms of adjudication or versification, al-Iṣfahānī favours this report, with its emphasis on ‘Alī. As a matter of fact, the case of ‘Alī’s armour comes from neither Ibn Sa’d nor Wakī‘, but from ‘Abdallāh b. Muḥammad, who narrated to al-Iṣfahānī at Ahwāz, according to the *isnād* of the report, and who appears only once in the entire *Aghānī*.¹²⁰¹ That is, despite the fact al-Iṣfahānī had access to the corpora of Ibn Sa’d and Wakī‘ and, indeed, includes their narrations in the article about Shurayḥ, he resorts to a rare source to relay the account, which underscores ‘Alī’s merits and the standing of his sons. The use of this special source, ‘Abdallāh b. Muḥammad, can be explained with reference to al-Iṣfahānī’s sectarian tendency — Shurayḥ’s *qaḍā* is nothing compared to ‘Alī’s *faḍā’il*.

While the special and rare sources are useful indicators, the use of this material does not necessarily provide much information *per se* about al-Iṣfahānī’s perception of the past. Rather, it has to be examined alongside other factors, such as their role and

¹¹⁹⁹ Al-Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmi‘*, vl.6, 113–114.

¹²⁰⁰ Wakī‘, *Akhbār*, 361–363, 367–380; Abū Nu‘aym al-Iṣfahānī, *Hilyat al-awliyā’ wa-ṭabaqāt al-aṣfiyā’* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1996), vl.4, 134.

¹²⁰¹ Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 30; al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.17, 157.

function within the articles. That is, al-Iṣfahānī's inclusion of the narration from 'Abdallāh b. Muḥammad at al-Ahwāz *per se* does not reveal a sectarian tendency. However, it is a deliberate use with certain purpose, when we consider the fact that al-Iṣfahānī could have mentioned other examples by quoting Ibn Sa'd and Wakī'.

Appendix Six: Textual Comparison between the *Aghānī* and *Sharḥ nahj al-balāgha*

من الأغاني

أخبرني أحمد بن عبد العزيز الجوهري قال حدثنا عمر بن شبة قال حدثنا هارون بن عمر قال حدثنا أيوب بن سويد قال حدثنا يحيى بن يزيد عن عمر بن عبد الله الليثي " عن ابن عباس " قال: قال عمر بن الخطاب ليلة مسيره إلى الجابية : أين ابن عباس؟ فأتيته ؛ فشكا تخلف علي بن أبي طالب رضي الله عنه. فقلت : أو لم يعتذر إليك؟ قال بلى. قلت: فهو ما اعتذر به. ثم قال: أول من ريثكم عن هذا الأمر أبو بكر. إن قومكم كرهوا أن يجمعوا لكم الخلافة والنبوة – ثم ذكر قصةً طويلةً ليست من هذا الباب فتركناها أنا – ثم قال: هل تروي لشاعر الشعراء؟ قلت: ومن هو؟ قال: الذي يقول:

ولو أن حمداً يخلد الناس أخلدوا

ولكن حمد الناس ليس بمخلد

قلت: ذاك زهير. قال: فذاك شاعر الشعراء. قلت: وبم كان شاعر الشعراء؟ قال: لأنه لا يعاظم في الكلام وكان يتجنب وحشي الشعر، ولم يمدح أحداً إلا بما فيه.

من شرح نهج البلاغة¹²⁰²

قال أبو بكر: وحدثني أبو زيد قال: حدثنا هارون بن عمر بإسناد رفعه إلى ابن عباس رحمه الله تعالى: قال

¹²⁰² The text derives from Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī edition, see: Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ*, vl.1, 260.

تفرق الناس ليلة الجابية عن عمر، فسار كل واحد مع إلفه، ثم صادفت عمر تلك الليلة في مسيرنا، فحدثته، فشكا إليّ تخلف عليّ عنه. فقلت: ألم يعتذر إليك؟ قال: بلى، فقلت: هو ما اعتذر به، قال: يا ابن عباس، إنّ أول من ريّكم عن هذا الأمر أبو بكر، إنّ قومكم كرهوا أن يجمعوا لكم الخلافة والنبوة، قلت: لم ذاك يا أمير المؤمنين؟ ألم تُنلّهم خيرا؟ قال: بلى، ولكنهم لو فعلوا لكنتم عليهم جحفا جحفا.

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